

# Braille Monitor



SEPTEMBER, 1980

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

SEPTEMBER 1980

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## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

KENNETH JERNIGAN, *President*

NATIONAL OFFICE  
1800 JOHNSON STREET  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21230

LETTERS FOR THE PRESIDENT, ADDRESS CHANGES,  
SUBSCRIPTION REQUESTS, AND ORDERS FOR NFB LITERATURE,  
ARTICLES FOR THE MONITOR AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
SHOULD BE SENT TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE

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RICHARD EDLUND, *Treasurer*  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
BOX 11185  
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66111

\* \* \*

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"I give, devise, and bequeath unto National Federation of the Blind, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or "\_\_\_\_\_ percent of my net estate" or "the following stocks and bonds: \_\_\_\_\_") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

\* \* \*

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SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND — IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES

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### ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE PRESIDENT— TALKING CLOCK AVAILABLE

Even though this issue of the *Monitor* is primarily devoted to coverage of the national convention, I don't want to delay giving you a piece of information that I think many of you will want. We now have in the National Office a delightfully unique talking clock, which we can supply for \$80.00. The clock is 4 1/2 inches long, 2 3/8 inches wide, and 3/4 of an inch thick. Therefore, it will easily fit into pocket or purse. It operates on an ordinary AA flashlight battery and is surprisingly accurate. It has a musical alarm, serves as a stopwatch, and can be set to give you the elapsed time for each one minute, five minute, or thirty minute period.

Along with the clock, we will provide without extra charge print instructions and either Braille or cassette instructions. For my own part, I can usually take gadgets, or let them alone, whichever comes handy—but this one is a grabber. It works, and it has not gained or lost more than a second in several days of operation. It has a clear print digital readout and (at least, so I am told) operates on some sort of vibration of

quartz principle, as do the better battery watches and clocks.

I hope to be able to get these clocks at an even cheaper rate in the months ahead. However, as I have already indicated we now have them available for \$80.00 and can ship them immediately.

Let me say one more thing on another topic: I am pleased to tell you that Joyce Scanlan has just called me to say that the Minnesota courts have now denied the motion of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind giving them a protective order concerning their proxy votes in last year's election. In other words, the courts have told the Society that they are ordered to let us see their proxies. If they don't do it, we will ask the Judge to cite them for contempt of court. As you know, the Society has claimed all along that it got 25,000 proxies. Now that they have to prove up, they had better have each and every one of those 25,000, and they had better have real live names. Otherwise, the Society will have even more problems than it already has.

### CONVENTION 1980

The 40th Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind was the anniversary of a mature movement in full progress. Some 2,000 Federationists from throughout the country along with foreign visitors gathered at the Leamington Hotel in Minneapolis for the 1980 convention. It was a week of intense activity. The importance of the general business sessions held Tuesday through Friday, July 1 through 4,

can not be exaggerated, however, the activities of the convention included a great deal more than that. The ingredients of this year's convention were seminars, committee work, demonstrations, the acquiring of vital information, renewed friendships, and renewed dedication with a frosting of fun. Without doubt this was the best convention we have ever had and also without doubt its significance and impact on the lives of the

blind have already been and will continue to be more far-reaching than any other meeting held this year, or during the past decade.

The first major event of the 1980 convention was a seminar on the development of stronger state and local affiliates, held Saturday, June 28. President Jernigan discussed different procedures that are proper in local chapters, state affiliates and the national administration of the Federation. His remarks dealt with how much parliamentary procedure is useful; how to make banquets effective; activities that are most valuable locally, state wide and nationally; how to get good rates and service from convention hotels and generally how to increase the strength and vitality of the movement. Mr. Owen Cudney, Certified Public Accountant of Cudney, Ecord and McEnroe from Kansas City, Kansas, presented valuable technical information about record keeping and reporting of financial data. Mr. Cudney had prepared a manual containing this kind of specialized information and one copy of it was given to each state affiliate. Taped copies of this seminar and the *Accounting Guide for Affiliates of the NFB* are available for purchase from the National Office at a cost of \$8.00.

A new registration system was introduced this year. Mrs. Mary Ellen Anderson, Assistant to the NFB President, developed a system so streamlined that no one had to stand in line. This meant that the crowd which has traditionally gathered in the registration area on Sunday was able to spend its time in the exhibit room and elsewhere. As usual on Sunday, the exhibit room was in full swing with demonstrations of new equipment, distribution of literature from dozens of companies and services, the sale of various kinds of items and free samples of RC Cola from the Merchants Division. The exhibit room continued to be

open and active throughout the remainder of the week when business sessions of the convention were not in progress.

Other major events on Sunday were the meeting of the Resolutions Committee and the wine and cheese tasting party held by the Committee on Cultural Exchange and International Programs along with many others. Refreshments and hospitality were available throughout the convention in the Presidential Suite and the Minnesota Suite on the 14th floor of the Leamington.

An open meeting of the Board of Directors occurred at 10:00 A.M. Monday morning June 30. At that time, Dr. Jernigan and Trish Miller, Chairman of the Committee on Associates, announced the winners of the Associates contest which ran from June 1, 1979, through May 31, 1980. The individuals who won the prizes can indeed be proud of the contribution they have made to the National Federation of the Blind.

The first three prizes were won by members from Alaska. Sandy Sanderson recruited 242 Associates raising a total of \$3,082 for the national treasury. As Sandy says: The bear has spoken. Lee Hagmeier recruited 154 Associates and raised \$2,380. Darrel Nather recruited 108 Associates and raised \$1,507. The winner of the 4th prize was not from Alaska, but from Michigan and formerly from Florida. She is Gail Flateau, recently become Gail Thompson, and she recruited 84 Associates and raised \$1,875 for the national treasury.

NFB members wore ribbons during the convention to indicate the number of Associates they had recruited during the past year: 9 or fewer, white ribbons; 10 to 24, red ribbons; and 25 to 49, gold. Eight hard-working Federationists recruited 50 or more Associates and they wore blue ribbons. Besides the four prize winners, those who wore blue ribbons at this convention

were Tom Stevens of Missouri, 67 Associates; Sharon Gold of California, 60; E. U. Parker of Mississippi, 57; and Alan Glickman of Illinois, 56.

During the contest 322 Federationists recruited 1,123 Associates raising \$46,570.62. President Jernigan reminded the members that the 1980-81 Associates contest began June 1, and is now in full swing. At the Baltimore convention next year prizes will be presented similar to those given this year: \$1,000 first prize, \$500 second prize, \$200 third prize and \$100 fourth prize. This year's winners have challenged all of us to beat them or catch them in the next contest. Gail Plateau Thompson declared that "the bear may have spoken, but the Michigan wolverine will be heard from."

Many of the delegates wore two ribbons on their convention badges, one for recruiting Associates and a second for participation in the Pre-Authorized Check (PAC) Plan. Throughout the convention the PAC Committee was busy and the reports by its chairman Marc Maurer were a measure of the vitality and renewed commitment of Federationists at this convention.

In addition to registration and exhibits, Monday afternoon was occupied by meetings of divisions and committees. It has become impossible for any single person to participate in all the activities that occur at NFB conventions and trying to decide which division or committee meeting to attend makes one acutely aware of the many dimensions of the Federation. There is not space in the *Braille Monitor* to give a thorough report on the activities of the various divisions and committees of the NFB. It has become necessary to depend on newsletters and other correspondence for this information.

Besides the seminar on affiliate growth and development held on Saturday, June 28, Job Opportunities for the Blind

held a seminar on Saturday, July 5, which was attended by more than 200 people, many of whom are seeking competitive employment. The program included a report on the progress of JOB by its Director, Duane Gerstenberger; discussion of resumes and interviews by Marc Maurer and Dick Edlund; determining what jobs you qualify for by Rami Rabby; discussions of technology available to blind persons on the job by Jim Willows; and discussion of Title V of the Rehabilitation Act and Federal employment by James Gashel, John Halverson, and Ramona Walhof.

This seminar was recorded in full and is available on three cassettes for purchase from the NFB National Office at a cost of \$6.00. Those who attended the JOB seminar agreed that it was extremely beneficial and productive. Once again it makes the point that NFB conventions are where the action is—finding employment, changing governmental policies affecting the blind, learning about new aids and appliances, meeting interesting people, getting new ideas, or just plain having fun.

This issue of the *Braille Monitor* includes reports of some of the activities of the 1980 annual convention. Additional reports from the convention will appear in the October issue of the Monitor. This was the best and busiest NFB convention ever. It is hard to imagine how we could have crowded more activities into the space of one week than we did in the past. But that is what occurred. The following articles will quote many of the speakers on the convention agenda during the business sessions and describe other activities as well. The tone, the incredibly vast amount of information, the timeliness and variety of the resolutions, the enthusiasm, the Monday press conference, the march to the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, the events surrounding the meeting of the Kiwanis Club, the

panels, the reports, the speakers, and the give-and-take of the jammed convention hall made this convention what it was—a vital, dynamic, action-packed, dramatic ex-

perience (one which will have a lasting and unforgettable impact upon those who were there, and, indeed, upon all of the blind everywhere).

### PRESS CONFERENCE

At noon on Monday, June 30, a large group of representatives from the news media of the Twin Cities came to the Leamington to interview President Jernigan and other Federation leaders. President Jernigan said:

"This convention will be the largest meeting of blind people ever to be held anywhere. That alone would make it significant, but there is much more.

"There is in this city an organization which symbolizes everything that we, as blind people, are trying to change. The National Federation of the Blind believes that blindness, in and of itself, need not be a crippling condition that keeps one from leading a full and normal life. Blind people are able to compete on terms of equality with others—the genius with the genius, the average with the average, and the subnormal with the subnormal.

"The Minneapolis Society for the Blind is located in this city. It is part of a national system of professional agencies. As we have observed its operation, it exploits blind people. It does what it can to prevent blind persons from organizing and expressing themselves as an independent group of people. But why in the world would it do that? One may say it doesn't make sense. After all you're all working for the same thing and blind is blind. But it isn't that simple. For example, although the government has an agriculture department, that doesn't necessarily mean every farm organization agrees with it. Somebody might say: What do you mean? Farm is farm, you're

all dealing with agriculture. You're all working for the same thing, so get together. Of course, that's nonsense. We're not working for the same thing that the Minneapolis Society is working for! Sometimes our interests may coincide.

"Let me give you a for instance. A number of years ago the man who is currently president of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, one Richard Johnstone, was then president of the Society. A newspaper in this city reported that Mr. Johnstone who was president of the South Side Plumbing and Heating Company (I assume he still is) got a large contract from the Society, a volunteer, one who is supposedly serving just because he loves humanity and wants to be good to blind people. He's a fine fellow and has a civic duty. Then we come along and we discovered this. We stir up trouble, in effect. We point this out to people. We say: This isn't right. A Federal official says: It's highly questionable if a member of a board of a nonprofit organization bids on a contract in that manner. This was a Federally supported contract. We don't expect Mr. Johnstone to love us, but you also don't expect him to say: I don't like those people because they exposed the fact that I got this contract. What he says is: The Federation is a militant, ratty outfit. These are bad people. You don't want to have anything to do with them. Well, I understand that. If I had been doing as he has, I might feel the same way.

"In addition, the Minneapolis Society



for a long time has been engaged in battle with the blind people in this area. I suppose most of you are familiar with the conduct of the Minneapolis Society with respect to the structuring of its Board of Directors. Until a number of years ago, the early '70's, the Society had about a 30-member Board, a fairly large Board. All were sighted; not a blind person was on that Board. Our people began to agitate, as our opponents would put it. We would have said it another way. Since this was an organization serving blind people, there ought to be some representation from the blind community on the Board. It had been understood by the Society's Board and by the organization in general—as a matter of fact it was provided in the bylaws and in its corporate charter—that if you paid a dollar, you were a member and therefore, eligible to vote and a part of it all. Our people went to the Society and some of them joined. The Society all of a sudden decided it was going to throw everybody out as members and nobody was going to be a member, except the members of the Board. Then it ultimately got some blind people on its Board. Some of them were token blind people. If you don't deal with the organized group, but you go out and pick, you can get somebody who will say whatever you please. Our local affiliate here, the local blind people in Minneapolis and the Minnesota area went to court and it was a long battle. The Society tried to wiggle out of it by saying: Really it wasn't the local people who did it. It was this mean outfit from out of state. They decided to make of it out-of-state interference. That's nonsense. The people who are local blind people carried the fight. The courts agreed with us.

“The courts ordered an election. It took seven long years before we ever got that done. In the meantime, we were publicizing

that. Do you expect the Society to love the organized blind movement? Of course not! It violates everything that people thought about blindness and what blindness is. People are accustomed—the press is accustomed and everybody is accustomed—to think of blind people as needing service. Here's a wonderful outfit that gives them service and what a great thing it is! Pillars of the community go down and become Board members and that's a great thing. Some people who serve on the Board doubtless are fine people. I'm not saying that they aren't. But the principle is wrong when blind people are excluded.

“When we got an election ordered by the courts, proxy voting was permitted. The Society took our proxies and insisted that they count them and determine whether they were valid. The court ordered the Society to let us see their proxies and they won't do it. That's been some months ago, but they haven't done it. As a result of that election, we got eight members on their Board. I do not know whether they honestly won the election because we have not been able to see their proxies. They saw ours. They picked through and counted ours, but we weren't able to see theirs at all. What kind of fair play is that?

“People who are on the Board—members of their own Board of Directors now—are not allowed to know what salary and fringe benefits Jesse Rosten, who is the paid Director of the Society, gets! What kind of treatment is that? Why in the world has it not been trumpeted far and wide in the press? Why does this community tolerate that kind of second-class treatment of blind people? It isn't right and it isn't fair. The Board has a right to employ Jesse Rosten—yes. It has a right to go to the community for some money—yes. Tom Scanlan here is a member of that Board. To say to him: Because we don't like your views,

we aren't going to let you know what your employee, Jesse Rosten, makes and what his fringe benefits are, what his duties are or anything else—that isn't right.

"Now one more thing which leads to what we propose to do about this. Many of you may know about the Kettner case. If you don't you should. It typifies something that we have been battling. We've been saying that blind persons who work in sheltered shops ought to be paid minimum wages at least. And workshops say: We can't afford to do that. They say: These shops are not productive and many workers are multiply handicapped, so we can't afford to do that. The answer to that is simple. Let's take the Lawrence Kettner case. Kettner was a newly-blinded individual who worked at the shop and was evaluated over a period of 14 days. He was tested only on the second, third, sixth and eighth of those days, not after the eighth. The Society itself said that he went from 49% of normal production to 79%, but they didn't give him any more tests after the eighth day. One wonders if he wouldn't have got up to full production by the 14th. Kettner says that his equipment was faulty; there were often delays in bringing him supplies; that his job duties were changed frequently during the time period, and all of that while he was being evaluated to see if he could produce at a normal rate. In addition to that, he says he was called into the Director's office, Jesse Rosten's office. He was badgered and told if he didn't sign a statement that he was capable of only 3/4 of normal production, 75%, he wouldn't be paid for the work he'd already done. He needed the money; he signed. What would you have done? At the same time, he had gone out and got a job in competitive employment at above the minimum wage and he subsequently got a raise. He obviously was capable of productive employment. At

least somebody thought so. You might say: Well, why did he sign? What do you do when you get into an office and you're told: You won't get the pay you've already earned, so sign. You do sign. But we have exposed that case. Of course, we understand why the Minneapolis Society for the Blind hates us as a movement. We don't hate them.

"What we do intend to do is to let the world know. Once the public in this city really understands what that organization has done to blind people, it will force them to reform. It won't permit this kind of thing.

"Therefore, on Wednesday (if you will look at what it says in the agenda) at 9:30 we will first have a full explanation of what the Society has done. We'll do that in this hotel. We're going to lay out the facts. Then you will notice at 10:30 the agenda item is "The People Move." Well, we will move. By our thousands we'll take to the streets in an orderly fashion in the American way of expressing an opinion and a view that we want to bring to public attention. We will go to the Society and take our problem and the exploitation which we have suffered to the public. The public will be the final arbiter. In the meantime, this very week we are going back to court and ask that the Minneapolis Society be cited for contempt for not abiding by the court orders. The president of our local affiliate, the National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota, can explain more about it. We believe that, although the blind are a comparatively small minority with only some 500,000 people in this country, that nevertheless, human lives and human souls are not measured by the gross or the hundred or the ton or the thousands. They're measured in human terms. We believe that once the press and the public are fully alerted, this situation will not be allowed to con-

tinue. This is symptomatic of a much broader problem that is occurring in this country. That problem is this: Not all, but many of the agencies doing work with the blind have taken alarm that we have exposed some of the exploitation which is going on in some of the governmental and private social service agencies and they have combined to try to destroy the National Federation of the Blind—to try to destroy our reputations and our livelihoods as human beings.

“We can’t take to the streets and fight back with tooth and claw and we don’t want to. We live in a civilized society—at least, we hope and believe we do. But we can take our case to the public and that’s what we’re doing. We can let people know what is happening. On Wednesday we will march to the Society and we will talk to the public about why we have taken to the streets. We will also go to the courts this week and we will ask the courts to speak to the Society again and to enforce the court orders. I can’t believe that the press in this community knows this, for if it did the situation would’ve been publicized and not tolerated. The Society admits that it spent almost \$150,000 to win that election last fall, and those are charitably contributed funds. I don’t know how much more was spent. I don’t believe that the people who contribute to the Society—if they really knew how that money was spent—would think that was good use of the money.

“We ought to say to you that the Minneapolis Society is only representative of the broader problem in the country. It’s not limited to Minnesota. To round out this picture, the sheltered shops say that they can’t pay minimum wages. But some sheltered shops in this country do pay minimum wages and have as many multiply handicapped people employed as the Minneapolis Society has. But also, you’d be

surprised at what they regard as multiply handicapped. For example, if you’re 55, you’re multiply handicapped. Well, I’m almost there, not quite. I’d presumably be multiply handicapped then, if I’m not already. If you’re 20 pounds overweight, you’re multiply handicapped. I may be triply handicapped soon, then. Now you know, that’s really not multiple handicapping as a normal human being understands the term. There are all kinds of other generalities put in there. Even if it were true that blind people are less productive—and I don’t believe it—what about the fact that the Society and other sheltered shops in this country don’t have to pay taxes? That in itself would give them a tremendous advantage in competing. What about the fact that they get Federal rehabilitation funds and a subsidy? What about the fact that they often get gifts from the community, certainly the Society does. What does all that go for, if it’s not to offset some of the normal problems they would face in training in rehabilitation and employment?”

Question from one of the reporters: “The Society says it employs 75 people at an hourly wage of \$3.50 and that six of them earn less than the minimum wage. If this is true, what is the problem?”

Answer by Dr. Jernigan: “If it’s true—let’s start with that. If you had a company here in Minneapolis which was a normal, ordinary company and it said: We have 75 people employed and we pay them an average of \$3.50 an hour, you’d stop them right there and say that the average minimum wage for most industry is not the statutory \$3.10. It runs well up between \$4.00 and \$5.00. Then if they say we have six people we pay below the statutory minimum wage, then you’d say: What! You have six or about 8% of your employees you pay less than the statutory minimum wage? How come? You yourself state the issue if what

they say is true. But also the issue is a great deal more than minimum wages. For instance, contracts, sweetheart deals between the Society and its president (Mr. Johnstone), proxies, court orders violated, attempts made with other people to try to crush organizations of blind people. There are all kinds of issues; the minimum wage is only one."

Question: "Sixteen of the Board members are now blind. Have there been any improvements since that has happened?"

Dr. Jernigan: "Some of these are hand-picked. The blacks have a term: Uncle Tom. If the black civil rights movement had been bogged down by governmental agencies and private groups saying: We're not going to deal with you as an organized entity—no NAACP, no Urban League, no nothing—we're going to deal with you on a different basis; we're going to pick our own blacks that we're going to deal with; we want good blacks to deal with; there would've been a row about that. There is something to be said for representation. Eight of the people on that Board now are our people. As you have been told already, the court orders are not being enforced. The eight who are on the Board are there in name only. They're not really a part of the management. They're not allowed to see the records that would enable them to function. They're not even allowed to see how much the Director is being paid! That doesn't make sense. Tom Scanlan, do you want to talk about that? Do you feel that you're part of the management of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind?"

Tom Scanlan: "I'd like to comment on the other blind Board members. By the way, Board meetings and meetings of Board Committees are secret. No one can attend them who is not invited by the president."

Dr. Jernigan: "Is the press allowed in?"

Tom Scanlan: "Definitely not."

Dr. Jernigan: "Have they protested?"

Tom Scanlan: "Not as far as I know."

Dr. Jernigan: "What a gentle press. Here are public funds being used by a publicly supported outfit which is supposed to be operating for the best interests of the blind. The press is excluded. And everybody else unless the president wants them in there. Goodness gracious!"

Tom Scanlan: "The other eight blind members of the Board are generally quite nonparticipatory, except when questions are raised by the National Federation of the Blind members. Their actions then are generally to try to put down the eight of us. They clearly have been hand-picked by the sighted portion of the Board and Mr. Rosten and his staff. Seven of them have been on the Board during the previous several years when we were trying to get a voice on the Board through the courts. In other words, they participated in the actions that were taken trying to keep blind people off the Board."

Dr. Jernigan: "Blind people are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of the agencies established to work for the blind. It's not easy for a blind person to get a job. This is not because blindness means you're not productive. It's not easy to get a job if you're a blind person simply because most people still believe that you're not capable of full productivity. In addition, there are certain aids and appliances you need. Very often the community at large believes that whatever agency exists (in this case the Minneapolis Society for the Blind) is responsible for looking after blind people. Then there are many times when blind people have been bought and sold like cattle. And what do I mean by that? I mean very often jobs are offered or reprisals are taken if people don't behave in a given way that is approved and accepted by the agency. I

want to make it clear that I'm not saying how much of this has been done by the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. I don't know personally. There are people in this community who can talk to the point. And I've already talked some to it with respect to the Kettner case and with respect to the contract we know about and with respect to violation of court orders. The pattern is clear."

Question: "How do you answer some of the charges that have been made against your organization, for example, the Thursday, June 12, 1980, article in the *Des Moines Register* which says that the National Federation of the Blind has used part of a \$157,000 grant to propagate its war views when in fact the Department of Labor says that it's to be used to establish references and to help blind people find jobs?"

Dr. Jernigan: "Well, I'd answer it in two ways. First, let's suppose we're the rottenest outfit in the world. We're worse than the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. We're made up of crooks and hoods and scoundrels. We're bad all through. Even if that is true, it wouldn't excuse one iota of what I've said about the Minneapolis Society. I'll deal with how bad we are in a minute, but let's suppose we're just rotten to the core—bad! Fine, go after us; if you're worth your salt, you will. But don't forget to go after what we've pointed out to you about the people we're dealing with. Then I'd say one more thing: They are in the business of service providing; we are a consumer organization. Surely all 50,000 of us are not scoundrels. Maybe just a few of us are scoundrels.

"Now let's deal with that \$157,000 contract in the *Des Moines Register* article. It's interesting that the only paper I know of in the whole United States that printed that article was the *Des Moines Register* and it's

also interesting that that article came out of the headquarters of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind in New York, NAC, and that the Minneapolis Society for the Blind is part of NAC.

"As I understand your question, it is this: Did we misuse the Federal funds? No, we did not. And I believe when the Department of Labor answers the letter which the National Accreditation Council sent them, that you will find they will answer that we didn't misuse the money. Now what did we do? We got \$157,000 from the Federal Labor Department for Job Opportunities for the Blind. Job Opportunities for the Blind helps blind persons find employment. We have got some people jobs as a result; we have distributed public service spots as a result; we've had seminars for employers. One of the books distributed—a book not produced with that Federal money—criticizes the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind. You can get a copy of that book downstairs. It is entitled, *The Blind and Physically Handicapped in Competitive Employment: A Guide to Compliance*. You can see for yourselves whether or not I have fairly and honestly represented what it says. The answer to your question is simply that it isn't the truth that we misused Federal funds."

Question: "You mentioned earlier that you were going to march on Wednesday. Are you really going to march?"

Dr. Jernigan: "Yes sir! You bet."

Question: "Has it been OK'd by the police?"

Dr. Jernigan: "Yes."

Question: "How many people do you expect to march?"

Dr. Jernigan: "I expect 1,500 to 2,000 to march. It has been OK'd by the police. I was told by this hotel that the Minneapolis Society for the Blind called up this hotel

and started inquiring to know if the hotel had any part in that march and how did they explain the fact that we were head-quartering here and going to make a march. I interpret that (I want to make it clear that the hotel didn't make the charge) I interpret that as an attempt to see if some pressure could be brought rather subtly on the hotel. It's none of the hotel's business if we march. And I don't mean to imply by that anything. The hotel said: It's none of our business if you march; we're in the hotel business. Why would the Minneapolis Society do that? I regard that as a subtle way of pressure. You bet we're going to march. We're going to go over there, 1,500 or 2,000 or more strong, to the Society."

Question: "How many members do you claim to have?"

Dr. Jernigan: "We claim to have 50,000 members. The Minneapolis Society alleges that we don't. So, you know, we lied or they did."

Question: "Can you discuss the chapters that have been dismissed: Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, Pennsylvania?"

Dr. Jernigan: "Oh, come on! Hawaii has not been dismissed. Would you like to see the Hawaii delegation here? Nobody's been dismissed from Hawaii. Nobody's been dismissed in Oregon. Come on."

Question: "Are you saying that's what the Society says? Are you saying that's their propaganda?"

Dr. Jernigan: "I don't know. Let me put it to you another way. Anybody who says that we dismissed the Hawaii chapter has lied. That's clear. Anybody who says we dismissed an Oregon chapter has lied. We did reorganize a California chapter; we did reorganize a Washington State chapter; and we did reorganize a Pennsylvania chapter. As I say, we allege that we have 50,000 members, and they say we don't.

That means somebody has lied and you'll have to decide who's telling the truth."

Question: "What about the Iowa chapter? I have heard some talk that the Iowa chapter was going to be dismissed or expelled from the organization."

Dr. Jernigan: "No, it's not going to be reorganized, at least not to my knowledge. This is a political action organization, a social action organization. You can find somebody in every state, since we are a democratic organization, who would like to raise a row and who tells you that we ought to do it this way or that way. I know no plan to reorganize, put out, dismiss, discipline or otherwise do anything to Iowa. There are close to 90 Iowans at this convention. I think most of them regard themselves as staunch, loyal members of the organization.

"I hope you will look at the book that the NAC people talked about. Look at it. See if you believe it's just propagating *my* views. That's one of the favorite tricks of the Society. It's one of the favorite tricks of any group that wants to put an organization down. They say: It's not the members we're mad at, it's just the ratty leader we're mad at. For instance, when the black civil rights movement was afoot, it wasn't the blacks they were mad at; it was just Martin Luther King. He was a scoundrel. And now the National Federation of the Blind. They are good people, the members. It's just that ratty Jernigan fellow who is bad and that we hate."

Jim Gashel: "Let them try to find the reference to NAC in the book."

Dr. Jernigan: "Yes, that would be interesting. I would challenge you. Look through there and see if you can find the reference to NAC in that book. See if it's a bad book. I'm proud of that book; I believe it tells the truth all the way down the line. I believe the Labor Department will

tell NAC that we've done a good job and I don't believe the *Des Moines Register* will print that. I hope some of you will get the February 1980 Monitor (that's our publication) and see how it deals with the *Des Moines Register*.

### MINNEAPOLIS SOCIETY OUTCLUBBED: KIWANIS, THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

During the first business session of the convention on Tuesday morning, Dr. Jer-nigan found it necessary to interrupt the scheduled agenda to report to the members about a problem that had developed. This is what he said: "We've got a situation which I had hoped we could settle without bringing it to your attention. I would like to get on with the roll call of states, but I guess maybe I had better take this up with you. Sometimes our opponents demonstrate the kind of people they are, and I suppose we do too, by the way we behave. We try to be decent in dealing with people. We have all of the meeting space in this hotel by contract. A couple of weeks ago we were called by the hotel and were told that the Kiwanis had ordinarily met here week after week and that they had a special program and they'd like to be present. The question was: Could we manage to spare a room on Tuesday, today, up on the second floor and let them meet? Mrs. Anderson said to me: 'What shall we do?' I said, 'We'll want to try to have good relations with the hotel—let's do it.' Then the hotel called back and said, 'We may have gotten ourselves in the middle of something. We didn't realize it, but the Kiwanis Club is going to have a program on blindness. They've got a man coming in who is LeRoy Saunders from the Oklahoma League for the Blind.' We could withdraw permission

"I hope that some of you will be on the march and see how 2,000 blind people will move. They say we don't have 50,000 members, but I'll tell you this: We have a lot more than they have. Let them muster 2,000 blind people somewhere."

for that to be done, but that creates problems for the hotel and it also affects Kiwanis. I first talked to the hotel about this and I said, 'We regard this as unfair and unreasonable.' Incidentally, I don't blame the Minneapolis Society. It's fine battle tactics, but we must now consider what our countermoves are. I'm not complaining if somebody wants to fight with us, only talking about how we ought to defend ourselves. So I appointed a committee. Don Capps and Dick Edlund went to try to sit down and talk reasonably with the Kiwanis. The Kiwanis have their office in this hotel. Don and Dick learned several things. First, the program chairman for today in Kiwanis is one Jesse Rosten of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. Second, we tried to say to them: We want the right to speak, in view of the fact that the topic the man is going to speak on is an interesting topic—one that we think we have something to say about. We have a copy of their program for today. Let me ask Mrs. Omvig who is up here to read it to you. She'll read what it says about the speaker and what it says on the cover and then I want to talk to you about what we do about it."

Mrs. Omvig then described the cover of the Kiwanis program as follows: There are three pictures: The first is captioned, LeRoy F. Saunders, Executive Director

Oklahoma League for the Blind. The second says, Jess Rosten, Chairman of the Day. The third says, Frank Johnson, Invocation. LeRoy Saunders' topic is: Who Speaks for the Blind?

After Mrs. Omvig described the Kiwanis program, President Jernigan continued: "Now, there are several things we could do. There are more of us than of them and, obviously, one thing we could do is simply break in time to see that we form a solid block so that they don't go up there. That's one thing we could do, but it carries with it a price tag. The price tag is that they'd exploit that in the media and they'd say that we were preventing them from freedom of speech. They have said, by the way, that they'll have Don Capps and Dick Edlund as their guests, but that they won't permit them to speak. Oh, is the Kiwanis President out there listening? Mr. Dewing, is he out there? Look! Don't be a coward, brother. Are you out there? We want to conduct ourselves in an orderly manner, but we're not going to have somebody come where we are renting the hotel and where they come and make speeches (I understand, by the way, that he fled) speeches—perhaps lying about what we are—and we as an organization aren't allowed to speak. I wonder whether a number of us ought to go and say we'll buy our tickets and then whether we ought to scatter among the tables and talk to the Kiwanis people and then take literature and pass it to them and so forth. That's what we probably ought to do. If the man gets up and lies about us, then we ought to insist on having at least five minutes for rebuttal. That would seem fair. Apparently, the man doesn't even have the decency to come and discuss it with us, although they've got their office here. That's the usual free speech that I take it they favor. I'm not at all happy about the way they've behaved."

After Dr. Jernigan's remarks, First Vice-President Don Capps came to the microphone and said this: "Dick Edlund and I sat down with the president of Kiwanis and I explained to him that Dick Edlund is a past president of Kiwanis and a member of Kiwanis and that I am a Rotarian and a former president of Rotary. I've served as a chairman of the program committee for Rotary for several years. I told him that I understand his situation, but it is more than just coincidental that LeRoy Saunders is here. If Kiwanis International had arranged a convention in a given city and had a headquarters hotel such as we have here and if somebody came from without and proceeded to speak contrary to the ideals of the Kiwanis ideals and philosophy, then they would be offended and would want to have the other side heard. I told him that we expected the same and I asked for an opportunity to be heard. He said no, they could not do that. He said he understood the controversy. Then I said would you do this: You've extended an invitation to an out-of-state speaker to come here to embarrass, or attempt to embarrass, and to place this organization in an awkward position. Would you extend the courtesy of inviting the president of our Minnesota organization of the blind, our affiliate here, and let the Minnesotans speak to the Kiwanis? He said he would consider that, but he would not make an outright commitment. I told him that that runs counter to fair play. We would be glad to be there as guests, but this is disappointing—very disappointing."

Dr. Jernigan then continued: "We do not want to disrupt their meeting. I want to appoint you, Ralph Sanders, to deal with this in your capacity as chairman of the Committee on Standards and Accreditation. I want you to get literature and see that it is put at every table of Kiwanis,



whether they like it or not. I don't want to cause any trouble, but I think we have a right to put leaflets there. After all, we gave them space. It was ours by contract. Therefore, let's see that each one of them gets literature on the table. If they say we can't eat, fine; we don't have to eat. If they say we can't sit down, fine; we'll stand up. We have to let them see the kind of mangy, shabby, scurvy trick that this really is. Let's see if they've got the guts, in the face of all that, not to give us at least five minutes to respond. They ought to at least make some gesture. If they're not willing to do that, that's tough! If we have to fight it out this way, we'll do that. I wouldn't think Kiwanis would like to do this. Since Kiwanis is not supposed to engage in political action and is a service club, I would propose that we send a strong protest to Kiwanis International about this club.

"It is apparently not enough that the Minneapolis Society for the Blind wants to exploit blind people, but apparently they also want to try to get service clubs involved in their political activities. We'll see whether they really think they gained by that kind of behavior."

At this stage NFB of Minnesota President, Joyce Scanlan, had some information to add. She said: "I'm sure that everyone realizes that this Kiwanis Club which is headquartered here helped the Society greatly in its campaign before the election last year. More than that, there is also a man, Mr. Vince Abrahamson, who is a leader in this Kiwanis Club and is also on the Society's Board. Also, the Minneapolis Society just recently had its NAC reaccreditation. One of the members of its on-site evaluation team was none other than LeRoy Saunders. He was just here recently to evaluate the Minneapolis Society. There are many connections here."

Dr. Jernigan added: "It shows how our

opponents feel about freedom of speech. If a NAC person wants to come and speak here, we'd be glad to have them do it. On the other hand, here they are exploiting a service club and afraid to let the blind speak. They have the head of the custodial workshop here demonstrating the truth of all the charges we've made. Underhandedness, deviousness, and all the rest of it—here it is for all the world to see. Let's hope the press has the courage to print it. Let's be sure that they see lots of us here. We can show them where the blind really are."

Ralph Sanders said since signs had been prepared for the demonstration for the next day, they could be used early to give Jesse Rosten a feeling for the demonstration that would occur on Wednesday.

Dr. Jernigan then spoke again: "Let me talk to you about legalities a minute. We need to keep our cool. They've played into our hands; now let's talk about how we do it. Under contract we have the space, but what space did we permit them to use? We permitted them to use enough space to have their luncheon tables. The rest of it is our space by contract. Therefore, if they say you have no right in our meeting room the answer is: Don't we indeed? We'll show you our contract. We didn't give you the space by this wall; we gave you the space around the tables. We also have an adjacent room on either side with moveable walls. At the appropriate time we will move the walls and we will show them a solid rank of signs.

"Jesse will learn that one shouldn't fight people on their own grounds.

"I am told that Mr. Merlin Dewing is now down in the pay telephone booth making a call.

"Mr. Sanders, get your committee and get your signs and get ready by a quarter of twelve. We'll give them a warm welcome,

but we'll also be legal and friendly. They've chosen to come and fight on our grounds. Let them. Let's be orderly; let's be courteous; let's be firm, but let's lay it on them."

Federationists, holding signs protesting the harmful actions against the blind by NAC and the Minneapolis Society, took up positions in the elevator lobbies and stairways to greet the Kiwanians as they entered the hotel for their meeting. During the luncheon approximately 300 Federationists were on hand on the second floor of the hotel where the Kiwanis Club was meeting. They gathered in the hallway outside the room, but the hallway was not blocked. Don and Betty Capps, Dick Edlund and Rami Rabby had lunch as guests of the Kiwanis Club. Dr. Norman Gardner, President of the NFB of Idaho, stood in the meeting with a sign that read, "Minneapolis Society Exploits the Blind." Dozens of Federationists stood in the two rooms on either side of the luncheon room where the Kiwanis Club was meeting. During the luncheon the walls between the adjoining rooms were opened so that a line of signs came into view where the walls had been and a room full of silent Federationists stood behind each line of signs. As the luncheon proceeded, the walls were closed, and Federationists descended the stairs to the lobby of the hotel where there was, in the words of Ralph Sanders, a meeting of the Music Committee—several hundred Federationists in strong voice could be heard throughout the lower floors of the hotel, giving a half-hour concert of Federation songs: "Bringing In the Thieves," "I've Been Workin' In the Workshop," "Where Have All the NACsters Gone," "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around," and most of all, "Glory, Glory, Federation," carrying to the listeners upstairs the message they needed to hear. The

Kiwanis Club could eat lunch; Federationists had more important work to do.

When the convention reconvened for the afternoon meeting, President Jernigan reported on his activities during the lunch break: "I believe that round one in this business went all the way to us and I want to tell you why. I told you how the Kiwanis got the space in the hotel and I also told you that I believed that the Kiwanians did not know that they were being duped. Some of the hotel management came and said first to Mrs. Anderson and then to me as we were breaking up this morning, that they thought we should not have the signs. I told them we were going to have them and I told them very firmly, but I really didn't intend to let it drop at that. I then went down to the manager's office and talked to the general manager of all the properties owned by Mr. Short. The man who owns this hotel, Mr. Short, is a very wealthy and influential man. He is the one who moved the Washington Senators baseball team out of Washington, D.C. You may know him from that.

"When I went down to the manager's office, Mr. Short came in. I said, Mr. Short, I want to tell you what happened and I laid out the problem. I told him we would not have objected to Kiwanis meeting here if it had been straight up front. We would not have objected once we had made the agreement that they could meet here if we had been given any time on their program in response. We would not even have objected if they had not announced a topic which was inflammatory and a direct attack on us. However, in the circumstances, since we've rented the space, we think we have a right to picket them. To all of this Mr. Short said: 'You're right.' Furthermore, he said: 'Ordinarily if we had a group meeting in this hotel, I would ask you not to picket inside the building. But I believe the hotel

was duped and I am embarrassed. You brought your convention here and I can tell you if I had known that they were going to have someone brought in who was deliberately speaking as a counter to your organization, I would not have permitted my sales staff even to ask you to release the space. I want you to know that I intend to investigate this matter and if it'll do you any good, I can help you to get entrée to certain political figures. I do not like the way we were treated and I will tell the president of the Kiwanis Club that I am authorizing picketing here of the meeting and that's the way it's going to be.'

Mr. Short went to the Kiwanis meeting and Dr. Jernigan went to the Kiwanis meeting. Dr. Jernigan asked President Dewing of the Kiwanis Club to request that LeRoy Saunders not make inflammatory comments in his speech. President Dewing was told that thousands of Federationists would be interested in what happened at that meeting and would respond accordingly.

Dr. Jernigan continued: "Then I met Mr. Short in the hallway and I said: I want to thank you. You made a lot of friends here. And he asked me to come and talk with him. He invited me to tell him all about the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. Mr. Short repeated his support of the National Federation of the Blind and of the things that were being done at that meeting. He said, 'I'm not prepared to let the matter drop here. I'll push it along.' "

The following is the report Don Capps made to the convention after the luncheon: "It would appear that the luncheon break was a most productive and fruitful occasion, to say the least. After our talk this morning with Mr. Dewing when we asked for time on the program in response to Mr. Saunders and were refused, we asked if we

could attend the luncheon and were invited by Mr. Dewing to be guests of the Kiwanis Club at the luncheon. Rami Rabby, Dick Edlund, Betty and I then went to the luncheon. When we arrived, they had our tickets waiting for us. We were met by Mr. Dewing who gave us our tickets and our badges. We were escorted through the serving line and to a table which had been set aside for us. The Kiwanians seated nearby were friendly. Behind us was the speaker's table and seated there were Jesse Rosten, LeRoy Saunders, and others. After the preliminaries were finished, they called on the program chairman for today, Mr. Jesse Rosten, to introduce the guest speaker LeRoy Saunders. By the way, also seated at the head table were several blind persons associated with the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, the United Blind of Minnesota and the American Council of the Blind. I recall Ray Kempf, Bob Pearson, Jim Olsen, I believe. Rosten seemed quite nervous and the guest speaker, LeRoy Saunders, seemed much more nervous. It was apparent that he had switched texts or switched bibles because he did not speak on "Who Speaks for the Blind." Generally, he spoke on his experience in workshops during the past thirty years, the activities of NIB, why certain multiply handicapped blind people were in workshops. He referred to the articles in the *Wall Street Journal* only in the sense of saying that he thought it was good because it made workshop officials examine their operations. He was certainly low-key—not inflammatory, very careful. He did not make derogatory remarks concerning the NFB. There was absolutely no reference to the title of his speech as it appeared on the program; he completely switched."

This is the way it happened on Tuesday, July 1, with respect to the Kiwanis; and one might say that Mr. Short caught the

Kiwanis Club—or that the Minneapolis Society for the Blind was caught short. It was a tremendous boost to the convention,

a study in battle tactics, and a lesson which NAC and the other opponents of the blind might do well to ponder.

### WEDNESDAY: THE MINNEAPOLIS SOCIETY, A DAY OF RECKONING

Wednesday morning Mrs. Joyce Scanlan, NFB Board member and President of the NFB of Minnesota, reviewed problems with the Minneapolis Society for the Blind.

"I wish to call to order this largest gathering of members of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. That is indeed a fact—that we are members. We are the largest gathering of members of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, although some may try to say that we are really former members, for we have already been expelled. We were expelled almost as soon as we became members. We have a lot of questions about that and we are going back to court in order to determine whether what the Society has done during the past year is legal. Certainly we know it is not ethical. In time we will find out for sure whether we are or are not members of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. We in Minnesota agree that our NAC accredited agency, the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, is no worse than any other. We don't need to go into great detail about the Society because you already know—most of you from firsthand experience, and others from reading the *Braille Monitor*—that where there is NAC, there is also corruption, repression, hostility toward the organized blind movement and generally a record of disservice to the blind. We in Minnesota cannot produce much that is new in that respect. However, we have been through almost ten years of litigation and have learned a number of things we might like to tell you about, just in case you might

one day have occasion to struggle as we have to reform a local agency providing service to the blind.

"The Minneapolis Society was put together in 1914 by a number of sighted people from a certain area of this city of Minneapolis. Its major activity in the early years was the workshop program. Brooms were made and sold at the Society and in the community. There was a meager rehab program, but not much until the late 1950's. During these years there were always problems between the blind community and the Society. There were many attempts at resolving these problems, but nothing worked. Still in 1970 there were no blind persons serving on the Board of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. At that point a decision was made to change that particular problem. The workshop employees had many problems and came to the National Federation of the Blind asking for help. At that time some of the staff of the Minneapolis Society would talk with us, but we were never allowed to meet with the Board of Directors of the Society. There was no resolution to that problem. We decided to direct our efforts toward a change at the policy-making level. As you know the blind community decided to get representation on the Board of the Minneapolis Society. According to its articles and bylaws, that Board does manage and set policies for the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. We later learned that that was the right thing to do. We also learned that

we cannot expect noticeable change in the Society or in any institution that is being reformed for the first five years. We had meetings and meetings and talks and talks and we learned that there would be no action from the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. When we learned about the possibility of becoming members of the Minneapolis Society, many of us paid our dollar and joined. On January 19, 1972, there was a meeting of the membership of the Minneapolis Society—a key meeting.

“We had two main goals in attending that meeting. First, we attempted to nominate from the floor a blind person to serve on the Board of the Minneapolis Society. That was ruled out of order. Second, when we attempted to introduce a resolution to change the bylaws and require a certain portion of the Board to be representatives of the blind community, the president summarily adjourned the meeting. Very shortly after that, we were notified that membership in the Society had been terminated, except for the Board members. After investigation we learned that the Board did not have the power to amend the bylaws to make a change in membership and we learned that only blind persons who were members had been expelled. Other members had been placed in a special category called Friends of the Society. At that point we determined to go to court.

“In our naiveté we expected instant victory. Of course, this was not forthcoming. After many pretrial motions, much discovery and investigation, and I must add some judge-shopping on the part of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, we won the case at the district and State Supreme Court levels.

“Of course, during these years the Society went out and picked from the community blind tokens to serve on their Board. Altogether, there have been eight or ten of

these. They were blind persons whom we either did not know or else we knew them to bow to pressure from the Minneapolis Society. They were handpicked because they would support whatever the Minneapolis Society said. Also during the litigation, there was a change in directors of the Society. In 1973 Jesse Rosten was hired. From then on we have had open hostility between the Minneapolis Society and the National Federation of the Blind. I need not tell you about Jesse Rosten. To put it mildly, he's a very vindictive person and absolutely vicious toward the National Federation of the Blind: our leaders and our whole membership, our policies, our philosophy. He is against everything that we are for. I understand—and this may explain some of his behavior—that Mr. Rosten has a background in the penal system. If that is in fact true, it could explain some of the behavior of Mr. Rosten throughout his campaign against the National Federation of the Blind and his cooperation with NAC.

“We have had quite a lot of experience with the president of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, Mr. Richard Johnstone. Everyone has read his speech to the NAC Board last November. I need not add very much about that. Remember that while serving as president of the Society and also as chairperson of the building committee, he awarded himself the large plumbing contract for a new addition to the Society's building. We also remember the case of Lawrence Kettner in 1974. Lawrence Kettner was evaluated—unfairly by any standards—at the Society's workshop and declared incapable of competitive work. However, he was able to obtain a job in competitive employment, held that job for a very long time and advanced in it.

“The decision of the Court was a determination that the Minneapolis Society had discriminated against blind people, that it

had unfairly and illegally excluded blind people from its activities. To all of these points, NAC has turned a deaf ear and has continued to give the Society a stamp of approval as a 'quality agency'. Let me remind you that the Society not only had NAC's strong support during all of this, but it also had the tacit support of State Services for the Blind and the United Way. Neither stepped in at any point to question the Society's activities when these activities were brought to their attention by the organized blind movement.

"As you would also expect, the Society created, during this confrontation, a local affiliate of the American Council of the Blind to serve as a chorus when the fight got hot. It is interesting that the local affiliate of ACB is made up mostly of MSB staff persons and shop workers, who dare do nothing else.

"With this set of circumstances we came to the Court decision and the election campaign of October and November of 1979. The election was also educational for us. The atmosphere changed from hostility to real viciousness. In case there is any question about it, the Court decided in *our* favor, in favor of the blind and against the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. The Court has decreed that the Minneapolis Society for the Blind has violated the law; has acted illegally and has committed illegal acts against blind people.

"During the campaign the Society went about soliciting community support. They went to the Lions, the Kiwanis, the United Way and they flooded the whole State with a million proxies. The atmosphere was really tense I can tell you. For example, I could describe some of the phone calls I had during that period. The phone would ring any time of the day or night. Sometimes there was no one on the other end. Sometimes there was an immediate hang

up. Very often there was profanity, obscene language and several times there were attempts to launch into long tirades railing upon me and the National Federation of the Blind for attempting to interfere with the activities of the Minneapolis Society. If I would begin to respond or ask a question, the person would immediately hang up. I was compelled by the phone company to put tracers on the telephone at that time. We did find out where some of those calls were coming from and it might be interesting to you to know that a few months later at least one of the people who made some of those calls attempted to become a member of the National Federation of the Blind. He was not accepted because it was clear that he did not support the organization; he did not agree with the principles of the organization and was at odds with almost anything that we knew about.

"During the entire election campaign we spent about \$5,000. This included printing, any mailing we did and public relations. The Society, on the other hand, spent \$149,000 as a minimum. That is the figure they published. \$149,000 is very close to being their entire United Way allocation for this past year. The United Way assisted the Society by mailing out proxies and a letter of support for the Society, although publicly the United Way has said that it has no position and cannot do anything to hold the Society accountable for its actions.

"Our march this morning covers a route that I want to explain to you a little. During the election campaign the Society produced large-scale ads on the radio and mostly in local newspapers for a period of several days. These ads—and we'll hear one in a few minutes—mentioned that if the National Federation of the Blind won the election of November 14, blind people would be dumped in the street of Hennepin Avenue. It said there would be a lot more cane

tapping on Hennepin Avenue if the Minneapolis Society were to close as a result of the National Federation of the Blind taking over. In case you are not familiar with Minneapolis, Hennepin Avenue is the place that is reputed to be the hangout for pimps and prostitutes in this community. You can tell from that what the implication is when it is said that blind people are being dumped in the streets of Hennepin Avenue and forced to do cane tapping there. Therefore, for part of our route we are going to march on Hennepin Avenue. (Cheers and applause.)

"Of course, all blind people have benefited by the campaign that we all waged together against the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. Minnesota may have benefited especially. For all of your help in the proxy campaign last fall, we wish to thank you. The hard work of Federationists throughout the country permitted us to secure eight positions on the Board of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. Three of these Board members are with us this morning to describe some of the behavior of the Society and their treatment of us following the election. We gave serious consideration to the qualifications of our representatives on the Board of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. We have placed eight very strong people on that Board and they have taken this heavy responsibility. You can judge for yourselves how militant or unreasonable they are."

Mrs. Scanlan then introduced some of the blind NFB members who are now on the Board of the Minneapolis Society. The first was Dr. Roger Drewicke, Handicapped Resources Coordinator at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Drewicke spoke as follows:

**Remarks of Dr. Roger Drewicke**

"One of the games that they're playing is that none of us were appointed to the com-

mittees of our choice. I asked to be appointed to the Personnel Committee and was placed on the Investment Committee. There are essentially two sources of funding for the Minneapolis Society. One is charitable contributions which the Society gets from the public. Not surprisingly, the Society is getting money by selling a low image of blind people to the public. The lower the image, the more charitable people may feel toward the blind and the more they contribute. The other source of funding is the contracts that the Society has with some of its own Board members and with various companies across the State. The way these contracts are used is a hard-nosed business principle. Jesse Rosten and some of the other workshop bosses at the Society know how this works. They use the paternalistic image of the Society to convince the public that they are really helping blind people by putting them into the workshop, whereas actually they are using blind people to contribute to their own salaries. This is self-serving but that's how they make their money. These two funding sources more or less feed into each other.

"The result of this—not only with the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, but also with the American Foundation for the Blind and the whole system of workshops and charitable agencies for the blind—is that the whole system has become extremely entrenched. We are asked, why do blind people fight among themselves? The answer is clear enough. The agency interests are so entrenched that it is going to take a good deal to shake them up or do anything with them. As far as the Minneapolis Society is concerned, there have been two results of the system. One is the poor quality of services provided by this entrenched agency. The other is the stranglehold on rehabilitation services. Because of this strangling, there has been no chance

for our civil rights movement to develop in the way that other civil rights movements have. The ideal would be a dynamic interchange between rehabilitation services for the blind and the consumers who are using the services. That avenue of input has been shut off by the Society. At this point it is impossible for a blind consumer movement to have any input into the Minneapolis Society system.

"Their stands have made it necessary for the civil rights movement of the blind to become extreme in order to accomplish anything where they are concerned."

Joyce Scanlan next introduced Nadine Jacobson who is a senior social worker for Hennepin County and also a member of the Minneapolis Society Board representing the National Federation of the Blind. Some of her comments are as follows:

#### **Comments by Nadine Jacobson**

"I want to talk about some of the specific problems that come up in an agency like the Minneapolis Society for the Blind because it has the philosophy about blindness it has. We see many specific examples of the way that blind people are humiliated and demeaned, both in rehabilitation and the workshop. If a person loses his or her sight or a person who has been blind since birth goes to the Minneapolis Society for the Blind for training, they often have very low expectations of what blind people can accomplish. They think that blind people cannot compete on terms of equality in the job market. They believe that maybe the Society can help them learn to get around a little bit with a cane. Other than that, not much is going to come of their lives. Unfortunately, the rehabilitation process at the Minneapolis Society for the Blind reinforces those attitudes. I would like to give you some examples of that. There is a lunch group at the Society where rehabilitation

students learn how to eat and there are four lessons in learning how to eat. The first lesson deals with teaching how to eat fingerfoods. I think I knew how to do that when I was about nine months old. The second lesson, however, becomes more advanced and it deals with fork foods. The third lesson is cutting meat without a bone and the fourth lesson—the most difficult of all—is dealing with meat that has a bone in it. This kind of training and this kind of attitude is insulting to each one of us. That's why we're going over there today.

"Let me give another example. When the new members of the Board were elected, we went over to the Minneapolis Society and talked with some members of the staff about their philosophy. Curtis Chong, one of the NFB representatives on the Board of the Minneapolis Society, asked the instructor who teaches woodworking whether he would expect the same precision from a blind student that he would expect from a sighted person. The instructor said: 'Of course not! I just want them to feel good about what they can accomplish.'

"Another problem at the Society is that there are no blind people in upper management. The blind people who are hired as rehab teachers are often not good examples of competent blind persons. For example, often when a message is taken, it is not written in Braille. The blind person takes the print message to a sighted person to get it read.

"I also want to talk a little about the sheltered workshop. We've been talking about the minimum wage. Yesterday I was at a meeting where we talked about how to get minimum wages for blind workers in sheltered workshops. A couple of months ago I was at a Board meeting of the Minneapolis Society where a resolution was introduced to bring about a pay increase for shop employees at the Minneapolis Society



to be retroactive to January 1. As recently as the last meeting of the Board no steps had been taken to put that raise into effect. I have received telephone calls from shop employees wanting to know if I can do anything about it. It's interesting to me that the ACB representative on that Board doesn't seem to receive any phone calls. I brought up the issue and said that shop workers are becoming increasingly concerned because they weren't getting the money that they are supposed to get. Mr. Bully said: 'When you get calls like that, you have to consider the mental competence of the workers.' Mr. Rosten told me that if I had brought this matter to his attention, he would've dealt with it. I'm sure he would have.'

After Mrs. Jacobson had spoken, Joyce Scanlan introduced another NFB representative on the Board of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind who is a graduate student in social work and currently writing a book, Miss Janet Lee. Miss Lee's comments were forceful, direct, and straight to the point:

#### **Statement by Janet Lee**

'I've been blind for three-and-a-half years and was a student at the Minneapolis Society. I don't find it pleasant going over there. I know where I've been and it's hard to go back. I and other members who have been elected to serve on the Society Board are willing to do it because we need the information about the corrupt kind of agency this is—information that has been withheld from us for so long. When we first started to go to meetings of the Minneapolis Society, Mr. Johnstone suggested that we write letters asking for committee appointments. We were continuously told that information we wanted was not available and our motions at Board meetings were inappropriate. We were told that the reason they were inappropriate is that the nitty-gritty

work of the Board was done in committee meetings. We waited and we waited and we waited. About four or five months after we had notified Mr. Johnstone that we would like committee appointments and what committees we felt we could make contributions serving on, we did get appointments. Naturally, those appointments came in the form of totally inappropriate use of resources that we as Board members had to offer. My background, for instance, is in community education and public relations and I requested that committee. I ended up on the Finance and Budget Committee. With Tom Scanlan's help, I'm becoming a financial wizard though. I'm not going to let them get the best of me. At the time of these appointments, we didn't realize that they were really broadening the group of skills that we would have to attack them.

'We needed some background so we asked for minutes of committee meetings that had been held during the year 1979. Each of us asked for minutes from the committees that we had been assigned to. When I asked for the minutes of my committee, they said fine we'll send it to you. And I began to wait, but I didn't wait quite as long as I waited for my committee appointment before I began to check it out. When I checked it out I learned from Melvin Saterbak that the minutes don't exist. I said, 'What do you mean they don't exist?' And he said, 'You'll have to refer to the Executive Committee; they either pass it or don't pass it.' When I said that I thought I really needed the information he finally admitted that the Finance Committee decided not to keep records. So even though we are legally entitled to this kind of information as Board members, there seem to be no minutes. We have some serious questions about that and are pursuing it with other people outside of the Society.'

(Miss Lee said also that all of the Board

members had been barred from attending any committee meetings if they are not on that committee and added): "So we have no access to any of the committees which we are not on which include the Executive Committee, the Legislative Committee, the Personnel Committee. Each of *us* is appointed to only one committee, although other Board members serve on several committees."

Miss Lee also stated that the eight NFB representatives on the Minneapolis Society Board have been limited by the very committee appointments which they have received since they are not permitted to ask questions about the function and details of other committees, committees on which they do not serve. Besides that, they are not even allowed to raise questions during the meetings of committees on which they serve. Questions committee chairmen do not wish to have raised are simply ruled "out of order."

Miss Lee further said: "Mr. Metzgerly, an attorney, presided at the last Society Board meeting. Tom Scanlan tried to ask a question about Mr. Rosten's salary, but was not permitted to ask the question."

Miss Lee said that while she was a student at the Minneapolis Society, she had spent a few days doing some work with the National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota. Upon her return she discussed the people with whom she had been working with an MSB staff member who said: "You have to understand that the people you were with were the elite blind. They have capacity far beyond what we can expect of the average client here. In fact, a majority of the clients who come here cannot expect to achieve what the people you are mentioning have achieved." This made a definite impression on Miss Lee and she said: "They call it individualism, but I think it's a very limited expectation of what

blind people can do. They constantly tell you about what your limits are. . . . this conversation told me a lot about what the Minneapolis Society intends to do. Not only do they intend to use the profit earned by blind people to line their own pockets, they also intend to keep us in our places so they can do it easily."

After these blind members of the Minneapolis Society Board had spoken, Joyce Scanlan asked Larry McKeever (the voice of the *Braille Monitor*) to play the radio ad used by the Minneapolis Society before the election last fall. It goes as follows:

"(The sound of tap dancing is heard.) On October 15 the world record was broken by 1800 dancers who tapped their way down Hennepin Avenue. But after November 14, we may be hearing a different kind of tapping. (Then cane tapping is heard.) Because that is the day a special election will be held to decide whether the National Federation of the Blind will take over the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and if that happens, we'll lose our United Way funding. Our services for the blind and handicapped will be canceled. The people who need help the most will be put out on the streets. You see, the National Federation of the Blind excludes anyone who has handicaps in addition to blindness and that means nearly 90% of the people we help. (Cane tapping continues.) You can help right now. Check this week's *Minneapolis Star* and *Tribune* or *St. Paul Dispatch* and *Pioneer Press* for your membership coupon. Return it with one dollar and we'll send your voting proxy as well as information about the National Federation of the Blind's position and their proxy. The Minneapolis Society for the Blind: Give now and we won't have to tap you again. (Two more cane taps.)"

This is an example of the kind of advertising that the court ordered the Minneapolis

olis Society for the Blind to stop using before the election last November. Of course, it is impossible to calculate the damage done by such an ad and others like it in only a few days in that climate.

After the presentation by Joyce Scanlan and the members of the Minneapolis Society Board, Dr. Jernigan reviewed some of the incredibly irresponsible and unresponsive actions of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and then concluded with this: "Anybody who says that the National Federation of the Blind excludes multiply handicapped blind people has lied. (Cheers and applause.) Look about you here in this room. Not everybody here is a genius. Not everybody here has no other handicap. We have people in our organization who are in wheelchairs; we have people who have limited mentality; and we have people with excellent minds. Like any other cross section of society, most of our members fall somewhere between the genius and the retarded. That's the way society is.

"If all of this you have heard this morning goes on, how do you explain the fact that the public allows it? How do you explain the fact that the press has not trumpeted it up and down the country? Is it because there are not that many blind people in the country? I don't think so. I think it is because the press and the country have never really fully come to understand what kind of exploitation and terrible degradation we have been subjected to as blind people. That's why! And that's why the march today is important. (Cheers and applause.)"

More than 2,000 conventioners left the hall in an orderly fashion, collected signs outside the hotel and began to march through the streets toward the Minneapolis Society for the Blind chanting and singing as they went. "50,000 blind guys can't be wrong!" "We'll speak for ourselves!"

"NAC, NAC get off our back!" "MSB hurts the blind!"

Federationists who could not walk traveled to the Minneapolis Society on the bus and joined in the demonstration. Marchers traveled along Hennepin Avenue for several blocks before reaching the Minneapolis Society building. Windows along the way were crowded with curious onlookers. Pedestrians in the streets seemed surprised and interested in reading the signs.

When we reached the Minneapolis Society for the Blind headquarters, the press was waiting to meet us. Some of the reporters were standing with cameras on the roof; others held microphones in the streets; all were anxious to talk to Federationists, anyone who would answer questions. Of course, some of the reporters marched the entire route with us. As the marchers arrived, Dr. Jernigan and Joyce Scanlan began to tell our story once again—only this time to the public in the city of Minneapolis over the loud speaker.

Dr. Jernigan said: "We're here to speak to the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. Since they won't speak to us around the conference table, we have to speak to them in the great outdoors before the public and everybody. By the thousands and the tens of thousands the blind of this nation have rejected what the Minneapolis Society for the Blind stands for. Remember the workshop song. It is truly a folk song that comes from the people. 'I've been workin' in the workshop all the livelong day, and with the wages that they pay me it's just to pass my time away.'

"Here, look out of your doors, see from behind your walls what the blind of the nation think of you. Look at us and see if you think there are just a few of us as you have said. We're going to show you what the blind are like in our thousands and remember there are tens of thousands of us back

in our home communities throughout this country. The days of exploitation are coming to an end.

"The public of this nation will not stand for what you have done once they know it and we're going to let them know it! Our line of march stretches back for blocks. We'll be here, all of us to see you."

The crowd chanted together, "NAC, NAC get off our back. NAC, NAC get off our back." And we sang the workshop song. Thousands of people singing together.

Joyce Scanlan came to the microphone and said: "Hello Minneapolis Society for the Blind. The blind of the nation have come here en masse today to speak to you, to tell you that we are fed up with your paternalism, your custodialism, your lies, your hypocrisy, and the arrogant, aristocratic way in which you have treated the blind so condescendingly. We will no longer tolerate it. We are here to tell you and the public that we will no longer put up with it. We will go back to court to see the proxies that you have not allowed us to see up to this point. We will fight you for violating the court order. We will gain our freedom. We will no longer be slaves of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and the National Accreditation Council."

The crowd chanted: "We speak for ourselves. We speak for ourselves."

Dr. Jernigan: "Minneapolis Society, in the name of the blind of the nation, I speak to you. We have come to the outer walls of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. We have come from our farms, our businesses, our workshops, and our agencies. We have come so that we might demonstrate our determination to be free. For four long decades we have struggled to throw off the yolk of bondage which has made us slaves to subminimum wages and substandard lives. We have battled the broom shops,

mastered the mattress shops, and rejected the sweat shops. Through our sacrifices, our turmoil, and our scars, we have climbed close to the final plateau on the stairway to freedom. We have rejected the workshop tyranny, repudiated the workshop system and refused to obey our workshop bosses. We are confident, self-reliant individuals—willing to give as well as receive.

"Through our trials we have learned the value of freedom. We have paid the price for first-class citizenship and we're not willing to settle for second-class status under control of third-class masters. We have come today from throughout this nation to sustain our march toward freedom, to renew our climb up the stairway to first-class citizenship. We are here by the thousands representing the tens of thousands and the hundreds of thousands, to reject the custodial, repressive attitudes and programs of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind.

"Our message is clear and unmistakable. It is directed to the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. It is intended as a response to the National Accreditation Council (NAC); American Foundation for the Blind (AFB); American Council of the Blind (ACB) combine. You have declared war on the blind of this nation. You have rejected reason. You have determined that character assassination is your only alternative to partnership and participation with the blind in society. Your time is passed; your present is perplexed; and our future is not in your hands.

"The top level of the stairway to freedom is just ahead of us. We say to the Minneapolis Society for the Blind: You can neither stop us nor dull our momentum. We have come to your gates to tell you this: We are simply no longer willing to be second-class citizens. We have said it to you before. You wouldn't listen to us. We tried to talk to you. You wouldn't talk to us. We are now here today to tell you as forcefully

as we can: We do know who we are and we will never go back. This is the message we leave with you, Minneapolis Society. Think about it and see where you get with the public in this community from now on. Also talk to your colleagues in NAC throughout the country and the American Foundation for the Blind and let us know how you fair in the war you have declared on the blind. We would've chosen peace, but you wouldn't have it that way. Very well, we are prepared on your terms to come forth and tell you we stand forth to meet you. We want good will and we want no strife and confrontation, but we're not going to be second-class and you can't make us be. That is the message we have to bring to you and the only message we have to bring to you."

This statement was interrupted repeatedly and loudly with prolonged cheers.

As Federationists returned to the meeting hall, we were tired, hot and hungry. We knew we had accomplished something very important and very worthwhile and hardly noticed how we felt. President Jernigan and Ralph Sanders told the convention that all four TV stations had covered the march and many radio stations had been there as well. Joyce Scanlan said that she hoped we had taught the Society something of the truth of our statements about blindness.

She said: "Jesse Rosten expresses his philosophy on blindness something like this: They say that blindness is only a characteristic, well here are the keys to my car, now give me a ride home." President Jerni-

gan asked if he is sighted and Joyce answered that he is. Apparently Jesse Rosten thinks driving is the only way to get anywhere.

President Jernigan said: "My answer to that is: Here's my Braillewriter, write me a speech. (Loud cheering from the audience.) It may be easier to get a driver for the car than a writer for a speech."

Joyce Scanlan continued: "I want to tell you about something that the Minneapolis Society brags about that I think you'll like to hear. The State Services for the Blind here contracts with the Society for the rehab services that we all get. State rehab pays 75% of the cost of those programs. The Society has to make up the rest of the cost from some other program. They brag that in the workshop they have between 26 and 27% profit and they boast that that profit is used for subsidizing the rehab program. Yet, they cannot pay their blind workers the minimum wage."

The 40th Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind will be remembered by those who attended for the demonstration at the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. Someone raised the question: How can it be militant to do something so productive and really constructive? We knew we were fighting, but no blood was shed. We knew we had won the battle in Minneapolis on July 1 and 2. If what we did was militant, so be it. It was necessary and victory sounded in the voices of the marchers.

## BANQUET

The banquet of the 40th Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind was as exciting and eloquent as Federationists might have come to expect. New at this year's banquet was an arrangement that made it possible for groups to reserve tables to sit together. The 1980 Minneapolis coffee mugs, with a blue and green profile of the city, were distributed to Federationists as favors. Barbara Pierce was the warm and charming mistress of ceremonies.

Barbara Walker announced that two state affiliates conducted queen contests during the past year. Sherry Martin was chosen queen by the NFB of Arkansas and raised \$289.85 for the NFB treasury. Joyce LaBonne was chosen queen by the NFB of Louisiana and raised \$425.00. Both were recognized at the banquet and received a stirring round of applause.

Reverend Howard May, chairman of the Scholarship Committee, presented scholarships to three outstanding college students. Albert Sten, who is about to begin his third year of law school at Northeastern University in Boston, and is working as an intern at NFB Headquarters in Baltimore this summer, was awarded the *Howard Brown Rickard Scholarship* of \$1,200. Mr. Sten expressed his thanks to Federationists who helped him, and pleasure at being able to work in the movement.

The *Hermoine Grant Calhoun Scholarship* (left by Dr. Isabelle Grant as a living memorial to her daughter) is to be awarded to deserving blind women in the Federation. \$2,500 was presented to Miss Miwaa Ikema from California. Miss Ikema has recently arrived in the country from Okinawa where she was the first blind person to complete college. She will be doing graduate work at the University of California in special education. Miss Ikema said that this

scholarship will give her the opportunity to continue her studies in special education. She plans to return to Okinawa to assist other blind individuals to reach toward higher goals and first-class status in their country.

Miss Tami Dodd, who is a senior at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, was also chosen to receive a *Hermoine Grant Calhoun Scholarship* and was presented with a check for \$2,500. Miss Dodd said, "The Federation has helped me get through a big transition from what I used to be to what I am now. I used to be a sheep, but I am not known for that anymore. I can think and speak for myself and I am proud to be a Federationist."

First Vice-President, Donald Capps, said in presenting the Newel Perry Award: "Like the Nobel Peace Prize, the Newel Perry Award is granted only as often as distinguished accomplishment merits and is given only to those who have made outstanding contributions to the progress and independence of the blind. Since this is the highest honor the organized blind of this country can bestow, it is treated accordingly. It is given sparingly with appropriate care and selectivity. The last presentation of the Newel Perry Award was made four years ago in 1976 at our national convention in Los Angeles to Dr. Andrew S. Adams, who was Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration at that time. This high recognition was accorded Dr. Adams for his outstanding accomplishments in the field of rehabilitation and for his wisdom in seeking the counsel and input of the organized blind.

"Tonight we are grateful for having the opportunity of honoring another distinguished American for meritorious service to the blind. It is with much pleasure that

we present the Newel Perry Award for 1980 to Mr. James E. Ryder. This outstanding gentleman has been in the field of human services for more than two decades. During the past five years he has gained the admiration and respect of the organized blind of Massachusetts. It was in 1975 that Mr. Ryder assumed the leadership of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind which at that time was providing only marginal services to the blind at best. With Mr. Ryder as Executive Director, the agency has developed rapidly, expanding meaningful services to the blind. From the very beginning, Mr. Ryder accepted and understood the value of consumer input. He hired blind persons at all levels of responsibility. Under Mr. Ryder's leadership the Massachusetts Association for the Blind was cited by the Kennedy Foundation and by the United Way as being the best agency of its type in America. Mr. Ryder has demonstrated a keen interest in all the blind, including the multiply handicapped. As Executive Director for the Massachusetts Association for the Blind, he expanded the residential care facility to include the deaf-blind in a regular school atmosphere. Also, under his leadership, the Massachusetts Association for the Blind developed a program of independent living for retarded persons who had demonstrated their capability to function in a regular school setting.

"In 1978 Mr. Ryder attended his first NFB convention. He was caught up in the fervor and the enthusiasm and the excitement of the Federation spirit. It didn't take Mr. Ryder long to fully accept the high principles and sound philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind. He took home with him from the 1978 convention strength and conviction that his trust in the NFB was right. Since that time his faith and confidence in the National Federation of the Blind have been unswerving. Mr. Ryder

knows about NAC, since he has had to deal with them. As Federationists, you will be pleased to know that Mr. Ryder dealt with NAC decisively and correctly. When he assumed the leadership of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind, he was faced with a NAC accredited agency. For nearly two years Federationists in Massachusetts worked with him. The best interests of the blind were not being served by NAC accreditation. Mr. Ryder fully understood and accepted the validity of the Federation's position and convinced his Board that NAC disaccreditation was in the best interest of the blind.

"In addition to NAC disaccreditation, Mr. Ryder worked with Federationists to encourage other agencies not to become NAC accredited. A man of great compassion and concern for all mankind, Mr. Ryder recently began another mission. Without funds and without much support, Mr. Ryder—along with Ruth Zimmerman, former deaf-blind supervisor for the Massachusetts Association for the Blind—set out on the task of seeking sites and funds for community living residences for the multiply impaired of all ages. This would include the deaf-blind, the retarded-blind, children and adults. It isn't an easy task but it represents a challenging human need.

"Mr. Ryder is described as a deeply religious person who finds unusual strength and resourcefulness from his abiding faith.

"Tonight we of the National Federation of the Blind, not only honor James E. Ryder for his understanding and active support, but for much more. We honor James E. Ryder for his understanding of our goals and of our aspirations and our objectives. Mr. Ryder is not like so many who wish us well, promise us much and then promptly forget about us. Mr. Ryder is not like those who profess deep sympathy for us and our problems and then demonstrate callous in-

difference toward us. Mr. Ryder is a colleague and a coworker in our struggle to obtain dignity and independence. He joins with us to change dreams into realities, believing fully in the concept that all men have the need and the right to function to their fullest capacity. Tonight, Mr. Ryder, this is why we honor you. We want you to know and we want everyone to know that we appreciate your having joined with us in our cause. As a tangible expression of our deep appreciation for your joining our cause, it is with much pleasure that we present this plaque to you. It is inscribed: 'In recognition of dedicated service, the National Federation of the Blind bestows its Newel Perry Award upon James E. Ryder, our friend, our colleague. He cares; he listens; he understands; he acts. Because of him the blind of America have a better life. July, 1980.' "

Mr. Ryder responded as follows:

"Normally I like coming to a microphone. People who know me well know I like to talk. Tonight it is very difficult. I am deeply touched and I need to mention other names. I was invited to an NFB meeting in Baltimore; I went and I was impressed. I was impressed by more than what I had seen at the convention. I was impressed by the leadership of the NFB: its heart, its courage and its convictions. I saw great skill behind the scenes.

"The President of the Massachusetts chapter, Al Evans, did a most admirable job in leading the Massachusetts Association for the Blind to de-NACing. MAB was one of the charter members of NAC. The skills that Al Evans exhibited were very impressive to me.

"At the same time I have been blessed with many beautiful friends and people in my life. When you say that Ruth and I started a new program to help people, very severely retarded multiply handicapped

people, that's partly true. But the credit for starting a new program belongs to a very unusual person. For two years I came home in the evening very frustrated because I saw no answer for deaf-blind retarded people past age 22—people that needed special care twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. A very delightful person sensed my frustration and she said one evening, 'Why don't you just do something about it?' I said, 'Do you know what you're talking about? It means leaving a job, starting afresh with six children.' I guess most men are envious of me when they hear this story. I have a wife with six children who says give up a job, a good paying job and start anew to start your own organization. I publicly say to my wife, Thanks. Part of the award belongs to her.

"After working in the field for twenty years, I have heard many things about your leader, Dr. Jernigan. Of course, when I first got a job in the field, many of those things were not complimentary. As you can imagine they came from NAC people. However, a very personal incident occurred during this process. I cannot describe the incident that occurred; it would be breaking confidences. But I saw him in a manner that made me think very highly of your leader, a man who is not only brilliant and a strong public leader, but also a man of great heart. As I look at your leaders, I thank you very much for honoring me, for it is their independence that adds meaning and prestige to this award. It gives me real honor. Thank you very much."

The main speaker of the evening was presented by the mistress of ceremonies, Barbara Pierce, as follows: "I said at the beginning of this evening that the banquet was the high point of our week. We have now reached the point which most of us in this room will consider to be the high point of the evening. In 1975 I attended my first



convention of the National Federation of the Blind, and for the first time I heard in person an address by this evening's speaker. Since that time each year he has been our featured banquet speaker and I have shared with many of you in this room the intellectual stimulation and renewal gained from his words. At the end of each of those evenings I have shared, too, some of my children's dismayed regret at the end of Christmas day when they realize that it is a whole year until anything quite so wonderful and thrilling can happen again. Sometimes it's hard for those of us who have been here before to remember that sitting among us are those of you for whom this is a first experience. I hope now that I have whetted your appetite a little bit.

"In 1949 our President became a member of the National Federation of the Blind, but it was not until the summer of 1952 that he first met Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, the founder of our movement. It was that summer that he first caught a glimpse of Dr. tenBroek's vision of the blind as a united, organized, powerful group working for im-

provement and justice in the field of work with the blind, but also in all of society. Since that time he has given unstintingly of his time and great talent, his energy, his strength, his wisdom, and through the years of his increasing experience. I don't have any reason to think that he has ever actually shed blood for us, but certainly in full measure he has given the sweat and tears that Winston Churchill referred to in another war. And in return he has received innumerable plaques and awards, citations and honorary degrees. But perhaps most important, he has received the love and respect of growing numbers of blind Americans.

"For many of us it was the fact that he first believed in us that gave us the strength and courage to believe in ourselves and to reach out and fulfill the potential that each of us has. It is my profound privilege and it is with very deep admiration and affection that I present to you this evening our colleague and leader, the President of the National Federation of the Blind, Dr. Kenneth Jernigan."

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## BLINDNESS: THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

PRESIDENT, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
AT THE BANQUET OF THE ANNUAL CONVENTION

*Minneapolis, July 3, 1980*

Napoleon, in one of his more expansive moments, is said to have quipped: "History is merely a legend agreed upon." Queen Elizabeth I, reportedly squelched Mary Queen of Scots with the regal comment: "No, history will not vindicate you, for I will write it." In other words, according to this view, history is only a myth and a fable.

But there are those who think otherwise. A time-honored cliché proclaims, with almost mystic authority: "History repeats itself, and those who do not learn it are doomed to relive it." The very qualities which make this pronouncement so attractive are also the ones which make it so dangerous as a standard of conduct. Its slick phraseology and apparent logic divert attention from its oversimplification. History does, indeed, repeat itself—but never precisely, and never exactly. There is always a new twist, a different nuance, an added element. For one thing, the past event itself (the one which is currently in the process of being repeated) is now a factor. Its former occurrence is part of the pattern. It has left its mark and skewed the picture. Those who fail to recognize this truth can never effectively learn the lessons of history. History can give us a sense of heritage and broaden our perspective; it can help us understand and cope with the present; and it can assist us in predicting the future.

Tonight (in July of 1980) we stand at the threshold of the fifth decade of our organization. As we look back to the past and call up our heritage so that we may deal with the present and plan for the future, let us bear in mind what the poet Tennyson said in the middle of the nineteenth century: "I am a part of all that I have met." Let us also remember that history has its cycles, its not quite repetitions, and its patterns and lessons for those who can read and understand.

When the blind came to organize in 1940, the situation was as bleak as it could possibly be. It was bright enough to create hope and dark enough to make that hope seem impossible. Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, the brilliant scholar and constitutional lawyer who founded our movement and led it for the first quarter century, summed up the early years as only he could have done it:

The paramount problems of our first decade, the 1940's, [he said] were not so much qualitative as quantitative: we had the philosophy and the programs, but we lacked the membership and the means. The workers were few and the cupboard was bare.

Each month as we received our none too bountiful salary as a young instructor at the University of Chicago Law School, Hazel and I would distribute it among the necessities of life: food, clothing, rent, Federation

stamps, mimeograph paper, ink, and other supplies. So did we share our one-room apartment. The mimeograph paper took far more space in our closet than did our clothes. We had to move the mimeograph machine before we could let down the wall bed to retire at night. If on a Sunday we walked along Chicago's lake front for an hour, four or five fewer letters were written, dropping our output for that day to fewer than twenty-five.

The decade of the forties was a time of building: and build we did, from a scattering of seven state affiliates at our first convention to more than four times that number in 1950. In the decade of the forties we proved our organizational capacity, established our representative character, initiated legislative programs on the state and national levels, and spoke with the authority and voice of the blind speaking for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

This is the way Dr. tenBroek summed up the first decade. The second decade, the 1950's, was a time of both triumph and trouble. It began with hope and momentum. It ended with internal strife and a civil war. By the mid fifties we had forty-seven state affiliates, money in the treasury, and power in the halls of Congress. In the fifties we established our magazine, the *Braille Monitor*, and began to outline to ourselves and to others the distinctive nature of what we were and what we intended to be. By the end of the decade we were so divided and demoralized that our very existence as a continuing and viable movement seemed highly doubtful.

Dr. tenBroek recognized, as did the rest of us in that corps of leaders he trained in the fifties, that it was no mere accident or coincidence that our growing independence and influence were followed by furious attacks from without by the agencies, and defections and strife from within by people who had been our colleagues in the move-

ment. The governmental and private agencies (the American Foundation for the Blind, the sheltered shops, and the rehabilitation and social work establishment) had money and position and prestige. They used these resources lavishly—not as instruments to aid the blind but as weapons to fight us and to protect their vested interests. They intimidated, offered jobs and positions to our potential leaders, promised services and rewards, threatened reprisals, and did everything else in their power to break our spirit and crush our determination. They complained to the post office and tried to discredit our mailings and fund appeals. They exploited the vulnerability of blind vendors and sheltered shop workers. They coerced and promised and rewarded. The purpose was clear: It was nothing less than the complete and total destruction of the National Federation of the Blind. In the face of such pressure it is not surprising that strains developed from within—that what might, in normal times, have been minor problems of thwarted ambition or temperamental difference became major conflict and civil war.

That first tide of Federationism and independence (which, during the fifties, lapped higher and higher up the walls of the agency establishment and the bastions of custodialism and exclusion) fell back upon itself at the end of the decade, spent and exhausted.

But the Federation did not die. The movement did not disintegrate. Too much was at stake. Too many lives had been touched. The blind had, for the first time in their existence, sensed the possibility of first-class status—and they would simply not be denied. We knew (all of us—not just the leaders but also the rank-and-file: the old, the young; the educated, the unedu-

cated—every one of us) that what we had so painfully achieved must not be surrendered, that self-organization (once lost) might not come again for a generation or a century. Those of us who were left in the movement closed ranks, fought where we could, encouraged each other, remembered our heritage, and marched toward the future. We understood from first-hand experience what the black demonstrators meant when they surrounded the factory gates and shouted with mingled hope and desperation:

I go to my grave  
Before I be a slave.

The decade of the sixties was almost the exact reverse of the fifties. It began in despair and ended in triumph. The Federation drew itself together, shook off the civil war, and began to rebuild. It was during the sixties that we lost our great leader, Dr. tenBroek, but he had done his work well. The progress continued. By the end of the decade we were bigger, stronger, better financed, and more united than we had ever been.

Perhaps the sixties can best be capsulized by the opening verse of our Battle Song, which was composed in 1964. It is known by every Federationist:

Blind eyes have seen the vision of the Federation way;  
New White Cane legislation brings the dawn of a new day;  
Right of the blind to organize is truly here to stay;  
Our cause goes marching on.

And our cause did go marching on, swinging into the seventies. And what a decade it was! At the beginning of the seventies we were saying to the world, "We know who we are"; and by the end we were

confidently adding, "And we will never go back!" In the seventies the tide of Federationism rose higher than it had ever reached before—far beyond the peak of the fifties. It was during this decade that we completed the transition from a scattered confederacy to a single, united national movement—powerful, self-assured, and full of destiny. We knew that whatever happened to the blind in the years ahead, the responsibility was ours. Our future, for the first time in history, was in our own hands. Despite the odds, we could do with it what we would. If we had the intelligence and the guts, we could win first-class status and the full rights of citizenship. We did not shrink from the challenge. We welcomed it. In fact, we demanded it. Our declaration of independence and purpose left no doubt as to the course we intended to follow. "We want no strife or confrontation," we said, "but we will do what we have to do. We are simply no longer willing to be second-class citizens. They tell us that there is no discrimination and that the blind are not a minority; but we know who we are, and we will never go back!"

More and more in the seventies we discovered the truth about our heritage and history, and drew strength and pride from what we learned. Our annual conventions were the largest meetings of blind persons ever held anywhere in the world, and (with affiliates in every state in the nation) we came universally to be recognized as the strongest force in the field of work with the blind.

Then, the cycles of history began to assume familiar patterns. Superficially viewed, it was a second run of the 1950's. As our voice grew louder and our strength increased, so did the antagonism and fear on the part of the custodial agencies. As early as the mid 1960's, there were hints

and signs of what was to come. The American Foundation for the Blind, seeing its influence diminishing, undertook a new tactic to tighten its loosening grip on the lives of the blind. It announced that it was establishing a so-called "independent" accrediting system for all groups doing work with the blind. As a first step, the Foundation appointed what it called the Commission on Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind (COMSTAC). The Commission was to hold meetings, appoint subcommittees, and arrive at a "consensus" for the entire field. Certain blind people (mostly agency officials or persons who were, as the saying goes, "unaffiliated" and, therefore, largely uninformed) were brought to the meetings; but tight control was carefully maintained.

When COMSTAC had finished its work and written its documents, it appointed NAC (the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped). The accreditation was, of course, to be purely voluntary and altogether impartial. The American Foundation for the Blind provided NAC's first Executive Director, gave most of the money, prepared to control our lives for at least the rest of the century, declared the whole process democratic, and said it was all very "professional"—as, indeed, in a way it was.

By the middle of the seventies it was clear that the principal issues of the fifties were again to be put to the test. It was the old question: Did we have the right to run our own lives, or did the agencies have the right to do it for us? As the decade advanced, the struggle exceeded in bitterness anything which had ever before been seen in the field of work with the blind. Many of the agencies worked with us and shared our aspirations, but others (the reactionary custodians in

the American Foundation-NAC combine) abandoned all but the shallowest pretense of dignity and so-called "professionalism" and tried by brute force to beat the blind into line. Especially did they concentrate their hatred upon the National Federation of the Blind and its leaders.

But the 1970's were not the 1950's, and 1980 is not 1960. The custodial agencies we face today are not the agencies of twenty years ago, nor are we the blind of that generation. We are stronger and more knowledgeable than we were then, and the agencies which oppose us (of course, many do not) are more desperate, more frightened, and more shaken in their confidence. Even the most reactionary are now forced to give at least lip service to consumer participation and the rights of the blind.

1960 and 1980 have many similarities, but they also have distinct and significant differences. For one thing, the forces which oppose us today have (probably because of our greater strength and their greater desperation) combined in a closer alliance than was the case twenty years ago. Led by the American Foundation for the Blind, this alliance consists of NAC; our break-away splinter group, the American Council of the Blind; the Affiliated Leadership League of and for the Blind; and a handful of other would-be custodians and keepers. They have interlocked their boards, concerted their actions, pooled their hundreds of millions of dollars of publicly contributed funds and tax money, and undertaken the deliberate and calculated destruction of independent organization and self-expression on the part of the blind.

If what I say seems exaggerated, consider a prime example right here in this city where we are meeting. Consider the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and its Presi-

dent, Dick Johnstone. The Minneapolis Society for the Blind accepts federal and state funds and solicits charitable contributions from the public-at-large—all in the name of helping the blind. Mr. Johnstone (the Society's President) supposedly serves without any compensation whatsoever, purely as a matter of public service and civic duty. Yet, last fall at the NAC meeting in Oklahoma City Mr. Johnstone made a speech about the National Federation of the Blind (the largest organization of blind people in this country—a group one would think he would particularly love and cherish since his purpose is to help the blind and promote our interests). Here are some of the things Mr. Johnstone said:

All NAC needs now is a few more teeth—and the money to apply them. Money can come to NAC—the same way it was lost: with *pressure*! . . . NAC has a policy right now, in hand, ready to go. They can help you in any problems with the NFB without board action. Dr. Bleeker [NAC's Executive Director] has that authority, right now, unlike other agencies who have had to fiddle around and go to their boards. Believe me, the Minneapolis Society for the Blind is going to have a policy the same way: any help you need, you'll get it out of us . . . Anything we needed [from NAC] we got . . . One thing we did learn, and we have researched this a little; and I hope you will, too, to prove it to yourselves: fight! . . . Negotiate? Never! . . . The only thing the National Federation of the Blind respects is strength. The power is with *us* right now, if we will use our heads and use it. If we unite and help one another, as you united to help us, we can't lose . . . It's time we go on the offensive, quit hiding our heads in the sand . . . Programs and agencies banding together in strength can only secure success for NAC and all other legitimate agencies . . . The National Federation of the Blind is going to come back and fight harder than ever, now. The pressure is on us, the

legitimate blind, to counter the new attacks that are sure to come . . .

How does one account for this bitter tirade? Is this the talk of a dedicated volunteer working devotedly for a "professional" service agency, which has only the well-being of the blind at heart? And what does he mean by the "legitimate blind?" Is Mr. Johnstone (in addition to damning our morals and denying our right to exist) also questioning our paternity? This is not the language of service and love, but of slander and war. It smacks of dark alleys, black-jacks, and hoodlumism. Why?

Perhaps the answer is not so difficult after all. Possibly there is a perfectly plausible explanation, one which may explain not only the conduct of Mr. Johnstone and the Minneapolis Society for the Blind but also the behavior of many of the others who attack and condemn us with such spleen and irrational hatred.

First, let us consider Mr. Johnstone personally—this dedicated, unpaid volunteer. He has been President of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind for many years. The *Minneapolis Daily American* in its June 2, 1972, edition carried an article headlined: "Charity Group Refuses To Talk/ Blind Are Being Kept In The Dark/President Of Non-Profit Society Given Whopping Contract." The article says in part:

The Minneapolis Society for the Blind has refused to answer questions regarding bids on a federally assisted construction project.

The question arose when the *Daily American* learned that Richard Johnstone, president of the Society, also is president of the South Side Plumbing and Heating Company, which has the mechanical contract on the project . . .

Frank A. Church, a U.S. official in the Chicago office of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare said that "special problems" are raised if a member of the board bids on such a contract.

Perhaps the fact that we of the National Federation of the Blind exposed and publicized this situation helps explain Mr. Johnstone's attitude toward us. Some professionalism! Some volunteer! It may also help explain the attitude of the Minneapolis Society in general. But there is more: In the early 1970's the Minneapolis Society for the Blind had a thirty member board of directors, none of whom was blind. According to the By-Laws anybody who made a cash contribution was, thereby, a member. When the blind tried to become members, the Board of the Society declared that *all* members were expelled and that, in the future, nobody would be considered a member except those on the Board. As Federationists know, we took the matter to court in the early 1970's; and after some seven years of battle and delay, we forced the Minneapolis Society to abide by the state law and honor the provisions of its own articles of incorporation. The courts made the Society accept blind members and hold an election. The issue is still not finished and awaits further action by the courts. Is it surprising that Mr. Johnstone and the Minneapolis Society hate us and wish we would cease to exist? Not really.

But there is still more. There is the Kettner case. Lawrence Kettner was "evaluated" so that the Society could get an exemption and wiggle out of paying him the federal minimum wage. To say the least, the "evaluation" was unusual. Kettner was evaluated over a period of fourteen days, but the studies of his work were made only on the third, fourth, sixth, and eighth days. His duties were changed; the equip-

ment was faulty; and there were delays in bringing him supplies. Even so, Kettner's productivity increased markedly (from 49% of normal production to 79%), showing the unfairness of not giving him time studies after the eighth day of the fourteen day period. He says he was called into the Director's office and badgered into signing a statement that he was capable of only 75% of normal production. He says he was told he would not be paid for the work he had done if he did not sign. He needed the money. He signed. Even as this was happening, he secured a job in private industry at a rate above the minimum wage.

We publicized the Kettner case far and wide, and we told the Department of Labor about it. Yes, I think I can understand why Mr. Johnstone and the Minneapolis Society for the Blind hate the organized blind movement—and it has nothing to do with so-called high-toned "professionalism." It is a matter of money and cover-up and exploitation. It is as simple and as despicable as that.

As to Mr. Johnstone's statement concerning the "legitimate blind," I would say this: He is not blind, so I do not see how that part applies; and as to the question of legitimacy, I would think (in the circumstances) the Minneapolis Society for the Blind would not want to discuss it. The matter of unblemished paternity is a sensitive issue. So much, then, for Mr. Johnstone and his talk about the "legitimate blind."

But what about the others who attack us, the others in the American Foundation for the Blind-NAC combine? Are their reasons for hating us similar to those of Mr. Johnstone and his Minneapolis Society? Let us call them off and examine their "legiti-

macy.” First, the Cleveland Society for the Blind. It is locked in a battle with blind snack bar operators. In 1972 the Director of the Society told the blind operators that they must contribute specified amounts to the United Torch Campaign or face dismissal. Under the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Program, Ohio was authorized to take as a service charge no more than three percent from the gross earnings of operators, but the Cleveland Society was taking eight percent. This could amount to as much as half of the net earnings of an operator. Moreover, as a condition of employment each blind operator was forced to sign an agreement giving the Cleveland Society unbelievable power over his or her personal life. The operator had to agree (and I quote) to: “have an annual physical check-up; eat a balanced diet; obtain adequate rest commensurate with the hours to be worked at a snack bar; bathe daily; shampoo frequently; use appropriate deodorants; wear clean underclothing; and wear comfortable shoes.”

We in the Federation (at least, most of us do) believe in regular bathing and good personal hygiene, but we are not willing (as a condition of employment) to have somebody cram it down our throats—tell us how much rest to get, what kind of food to eat, what kind of deodorants to use, and when to change our underwear. In the newspapers the Director of the Cleveland Society defended his rules by saying that “Blind people have to be especially careful.”

And, of course, he is right. We do have to be careful—of people like him. We (you and I, the National Federation of the Blind) took this Director and his custodial agency to court and publicized what he was doing. The battle still continues. Is it any wonder that the Cleveland Society for the Blind and its Director hate the organized blind move-

ment and wish we would cease to exist? Not really. Yet, they tell us that there is no discrimination and that the blind are not a minority; but we know who we are, and we will never go back.

The Cincinnati Association for the Blind and the Houston Lighthouse for the Blind have refused to comply with orders from the National Labor Relations Board that they permit their blind workers to organize. We stimulated those organizing efforts and are now fighting these two agencies in the Federal courts. Is it surprising that they hate us and brand us as “militants” and “trouble-makers?” Not at all. How could it be otherwise?

The Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind used every tactic it could (including the firing of blind organizers) to prevent blind employees from forming a union. We took the matter to the National Labor Relations Board, and we picketed. It is hardly necessary to add that the Chicago Lighthouse is a principal leader in the combine which attacks us. We picketed the Evansville Association for the Blind and told the public what the Association was doing (all in the name of charity, and with publicly contributed funds) to exploit and hurt blind people. We picketed the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind in Washington, D.C., when it was having a gala charity ball attended by leading socialites. We told these socialites and the public-at-large how the Lighthouse *really* operates, and what it is doing to the lives of blind people. Agency officials in Florida and Alabama have been criminally indicted. All of these groups (the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, the Cleveland Society, the Cincinnati Association, the Houston Lighthouse, the Chicago Lighthouse, the Evansville Association, the Columbia Lighthouse, and the Alabama and Florida agencies) have two things in com-



mon: They exploit the blind, and they are all accredited by NAC.

Then there is New York—New York, the home territory and the special turf of the American Foundation for the Blind and NAC. In 1978 there was a state audit of Industries for the Blind of New York, Inc. The audit showed that this organization (which was the principal governmental procurement agency for blind-made products in the state) spent its money on liquor and lavish parties and expensive cars and high salaries and God knows what else which the average human being would consider to be totally unrelated to the welfare of the blind. And what is Industries for the Blind of New York, Inc.? Well, it is a board consisting of the representatives of ten agencies, *seven of which are accredited by NAC*. They are flagships in the NAC fleet. Wesley Sprague, Director of the New York Association for the Blind, is (of all things) the long-time Chairman of NAC's Commission on Standards. Joseph Larkin, Director of the Industrial Home for the Blind of Brooklyn, is a NAC board member. Peter Salmon, the Industrial Home's former Director, is NAC's past president.

There are some five hundred organizations and groups in this country which might conceivably choose to be accredited by NAC. Yet, by January of 1980 (a decade and a half after its formation) NAC was forced to admit that it had only seventy-nine agencies in its fold. But let me hasten to add that these are very special agencies. Our best information indicates that they probably have a total combined wealth of somewhere in the neighborhood of a half a *billion* dollars. Think about it!—half a *billion* dollars! A few of them may truly be service oriented and dedicated to high standards and the best interests of the blind—but there are the others, the ones that Mr.

Johnstone would presumably call the “legitimate blind.” I have detailed for you the conduct of sixteen of these. Sixteen! More than twenty percent of NAC's entire membership. And there is evidence which could be brought against many of the rest. NAC: What a sorry, miserable spectacle! It is not a concern for “professionalism” which is the bur under the saddle of some of these people. It is the fear that we may expose their real concerns: the making of money, the lapping of liquor, the lust for luxury, and the push for power.

No, it is not surprising that the American Foundation for the Blind-NAC combine hates us and that they are determined to destroy the National Federation of the Blind. We are the principal threat to their master plan—their effort to gain complete control over the lives of every blind man, woman, and child in this nation—their hope to live happily in luxury ever after. To speak of “legitimacy” in the same breath with NAC is reminiscent of what Franklin Roosevelt said in 1936 about mentioning the depression in the presence of the Republican Party. It is like showing a rope to the family of a man who has been hanged.

As I have already said, there are both similarities and differences between the 1950's and the 1970's—between 1960 and 1980. In the fifties the external attacks brought severe internal conflict. In the late seventies we saw some of the same tendencies—but even though the pressures have been greater this time around, the dissension among us has been minimal, giving testimony to our increased strength and maturity as a movement. We are a part of all that we met in the 1950's. We learned—and history does not quite repeat itself.

There is also a new element, one which was not present twenty years ago. In the fif-

ties we had not yet become strong enough to get very many of our own people appointed to positions of leadership in the agencies. By the seventies the situation was different. In 1976 and 1977 we came within a vote or two of having a majority in the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind. A number of our own members had been named as state directors, and many of the other state directors were and are supportive of our cause.

However, there was a problem, one from which we must learn. Just because an individual calls himself or herself a Federationist, that does not necessarily mean that he or she is immune to the temptations of agency power—the ability to control lives and the urge to equate one's own interests with those of the blind consumers. Increasingly in the seventies we became strong enough to bring reform to a growing number of agencies and to play a deciding role in determining who their directors would be. Quite naturally, our people (having suffered so grievously from the poor service and custodial treatment dished out by the agencies) wanted to have Federationists as directors. Sometimes we made bad choices. It was almost as if, out of reaction to the miserable service we had received, we said: "Give us a Federationist—*any* Federationist—just so long as we can throw off the yoke of what we have had." It was a mistake—one for which we are now paying.

Some of these so-called Federationists had hardly been appointed to office before they tried to take over the affiliates in their states and make them mere auxiliaries and fronts for their own vested interests. They put aside their loyalties and principles and seemed to forget that they had obtained their jobs as part of a national movement—the overall struggle of the blind as a people to be free. They forgot (if, indeed, they had

ever truly believed) what it is that has brought us as far as we have come on the road to first-class status and the full rights of citizenship. No individual or state organization—no local group or single person—could have done it alone. It required the combined effort of us all. It still requires that combined effort if we are to finish the journey. In its absence none of us (not a single blind human being) will go the rest of the way to equality and freedom. We should have been more selective in supporting candidates for agency leadership—but we are a part of all that we have met. We have learned. Fortunately we are strong enough to absorb the shock of the lesson. We will not make the same mistake again. In the future the primary test of whether we will support an individual for a position of leadership in an agency will not be whether that person is called a Federationist but what kind of philosophy and commitment the individual demonstrates. Of course, this has always been our concern, but the emphasis is now different and the care more thorough. Better a neutral (one with the basics of a good philosophy, who is willing to work with us in partnership to win our support) than a Federationist in name only (one who takes it for granted that, because of his or her reputation as a Federationist—even a strong Federationist—we will automatically be supportive, regardless of the agency's conduct or behavior). We have come too far on the road of liberation to turn back now. We are not willing to exchange one master for another, even if the new would-be custodian has been our colleague or uses the name "Federationist." We will say it as often as we must: We want no strife or confrontation, but we will do what we have to do. They tell us that the blind are not a minority and that there is no discrimination; but we know who we are, and we will never go back.

As Federationists know, I get a constant stream of letters from blind people from all over the country. Some of these letters are highly literate. Others are not. Taken together, they show the pattern and give the details of what it is like to be blind in America today. They tell of the hopes and aspirations and problems which the blind confront. I want to share with you a brief passage from one of these letters. It is from a woman in her early fifties. In page after page she cries out with the heartache of a life of frustration. Here is part of what she says:

I went to the state rehabilitation agency because I was seeking employment. I believe I was referred there by the employment service. I couldn't understand why no one wanted to hire me. The reason given most frequently was lack of experience. But I was young. "How does one get that experience?" I kept asking myself. And the rehabilitation agency could do nothing to help me. I am sure that each employer I saw felt that I should get my experience some place else . . .

This part of her letter refers to her early twenties. When she comes to the present (the time of her early fifties) she says:

The rehabilitation agency can still do nothing to help me. My efforts to obtain employment are the same continuing story. I won't drag it out any further except to say that I have met with repeated failure. I haven't enough skill to get a typing job, and apparently I haven't the training or skill (or is it that I can't get the opportunity?) to do anything else. I never have enough experience to compete, but as was the case when I was young, how can I get that experience if no one will give me a chance to try? And (now that I am in my fifties) who is going to give me the chance to try with my lack of experience?

I feel already as though I am in forced retirement. I shudder to think how the actual re-

tirement years will be. I am not sure where to go from here—whether I should try to change my life, or merely be resigned to the fact that this is probably how it will be from now on.

I am sure that my story is not new to you. You must hear something like it almost every day. Perhaps you can measure my despair by the number of pages in this letter. I see my life ebbing away and I have yet to find my niche to occupy. This inactivity and lack of a life's work is not how I would choose to spend what is left of my productive years. I dreamed of the future when I was young. Now, I look around me sometimes and say, "Dear God, this *is* the future." I'm living it now. Perhaps it is the only future I will ever have.

How can I answer such a letter? What can I say to ease the burden or lighten the load? Day by day the hope has been killed, the spirit has been crushed, and the dream destroyed. Yet, NAC and Mr. Johnstone tell us that all will be well if we will only leave it to them and their agencies. All they need, they say, is a few more teeth—and enough money to crush the NFB. How twisted! How pathetic! In their luxury and so-called "professionalism" they do not even know of the existence of the deprivation and the misery—of the daily struggles and problems of the ordinary blind individual.

As we stand at the door of the fifth decade of our organization, we must thoroughly understand the lessons of history, for the eighties will be a time of trial and decision. They will require all that we have in the way of ability and devotion and courage. We must work not only for ourselves but also for the blind of the next generation, for they are our children. If not biologically, they are surely morally our children, and we must make certain that

they have the chance for better lives and fuller opportunities than we have had.

When we talk of history, we usually think of the past—but what will future historians say of us—of you and me—of the National Federation of the Blind in 1980? What will they say of our struggle for freedom and our battle with NAC, the American Foundation for the Blind, and the other custodial agencies? As I said in 1973, future historians can only record the events which we make come true.

They can help us be remembered, but they cannot help us dream. That we must do for ourselves. They can give us acclaim, but not guts and courage. They can give us recognition and appreciation, but not determination or compassion or good judgment. We must either find those things for ourselves, or not have them at all.

We have come a long way together in this movement. Some of us are veterans, going back to the forties; others are new recruits, fresh to the ranks. Some are young; some are old. Some are educated, others not. It makes no difference. In everything that matters we are one; we are the movement; we are the blind . . .

### NFB ELECTION

The terms of the five officers and five of the ten Board members expired this year, and all of the incumbents were re-elected for two-year terms. As Past President, Ralph Sanders of Maryland is automatically on the Board, and so was not up for election. The terms of the other four Board members (Al Evans of Massachusetts, Sterling France of New York, Norman Gardner of Idaho, and E. U. Parker of Mississippi) will not expire until 1981.

Those elected were: Kenneth Jernigan of Maryland, President; Don Capps of South

If we falter or dishonor our heritage, we will betray not only ourselves but those who went before us and those who come after. But, of course, we will not fail. Whatever the cost, we shall pay it. Whatever the sacrifice, we shall make it. We cannot turn back or stand still. Instead, we must go forward.<sup>2</sup>

We shall prevail against NAC and the other custodial agencies; we shall prevail against social exclusion and discrimination; and we shall prevail against those few in our own movement who would destroy it with bitterness and strife. We are stronger and more determined now than we have ever been, and we have learned well the lessons of history. My brothers and my sisters, the future is ours. Come! Join me in the battle line, and we will make it all come true.

### FOOTNOTES

1. Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, "The Federation at Twenty-Five: Postview and Preview," August, 1965, *Braille Monitor*, pp. 87 and 88.
2. Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, "Blindness: Is History Against Us?" September, 1973, *Braille Monitor*, pp. 10 and 11.

Carolina, First Vice-President; Rami Rabby of New York, Second Vice-President; Lawrence (Muzzy) Marcelino of California, Secretary; and Dick Edlund of Kansas, Treasurer. Those elected to the Board were: Beth Bowen of Florida, Bob Eschbach of Ohio, Diane McGeorge of Colorado, Peggy Pinder of Iowa, and Joyce Scanlan of Minnesota.

Those elected to office expressed deep commitment in their statements of acceptance. President Jernigan said: "Fellow Federationists, I am deeply moved by your

affirmation of confidence in the leadership of this organization. I want to say to you something I probably don't need to say. I take seriously the business of trying to lead as you want me to lead. I made commitments and promises to Dr. tenBroek in the last days of his life concerning what I would try to do with respect to the future of this organization. I've done the best I could to live up to those commitments. It hasn't always been easy. I know that some of the things I've done have been controversial and necessarily so. It could hardly have been otherwise. As we move toward first-class status, it can't be an easy road. I only want to say this to you: I will do during the coming two years the very best that I know how in leading this organization. I believe that you as members and I as President of the Federation have a covenant between us and an understanding. I will not hesitate to stand out in front and lead; I will not back away from hard decisions; I will carry our standard with what wisdom I possess. I believe that you have an obligation in turn to help make it possible for the organization to do what it's trying to do.

You have a covenant with me that you will work as hard as you can to help finance this organization, that you will support the leadership of this organization, that you will do all that you know how to do to try to make the Federation grow and to make it strong and to try to keep dissension down in the organization so that we may indeed have a day when the blind of this country can be treated as the first-class citizens we are. That is my pledge to you. We have been told by the National Accreditation Council in no uncertain terms that within two years they intend to destroy the organized blind movement and that they intend to ruin those of us who are in positions of leadership. We have elected a Board. It stands before you prepared to lead, and during the next two years the battle will be critical. My answer and the answer of this organization is this: We have elected our leaders. We accept your challenge. Come on, we stand forth to meet you!" The applause, cheers and songs from the audience left no doubt as to the support of the convention for these sentiments.

### **RUSSELL BAXTER BITES THE DUST**

On June 28, 1980 at the national convention in Minneapolis, Federationists first learned that it was common knowledge in government circles that the decision had been made by the White House to appoint Russell Baxter as Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration in the new Department of Education. Many felt that the decision was final, that there was nothing that could be done about it—but they reckoned without the National Federation of the Blind. We geared up for immediate action.

The appointment was opposed by Fed-

erationists because Mr. Baxter's performance as State Vocational Rehabilitation Director for the State of Arkansas has been extremely unsatisfactory as far as the blind are concerned. But Federationists have never been willing to accept defeat easily. Members began writing letters, sending telegrams and making telephone calls to the White House to protest such an appointment. Russell Baxter of Arkansas has not been a friend of the blind.

Approximately 900 Federationists signed the following telegram:

President Jimmy Carter  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Carter:

We oppose nominating E. Russell Baxter, of Little Rock, Arkansas, for Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Baxter's nomination is inconsistent with the efforts of blind and handicapped people to achieve full and equal civil rights. Civil rights for the handicapped has been a watchword in your Administration as a stated national policy objective. The performance and background of Russell Baxter indicate serious deficiencies in terms of compliance with civil rights laws.

Baxter is the candidate of some of the "professional" workers "for" the disabled and some of their Washington-based promoters. Thus, he is the candidate of special interests, and not a viable choice from the standpoint of programmatic competence. Baxter has not earned support from handicapped people.

We had anticipated that the Education Department would bring a refreshing era of advancement in Federal rehabilitation programs, but Russell Baxter represents the ineffectiveness of the past. Let us not suffer more of the same: your Administration can and must do better. Nomination of Russell Baxter would represent a serious judgmental error with devastating programmatic and political consequences.

Printed elsewhere in this issue, Resolution 80-15, opposing the Baxter appointment, was passed unanimously by the convention. Immediately following the convention, this resolution was circulated to the White House, to the members of Congress and to other government officials. Also, as soon as Federationists returned home, they and their families and friends began pouring letters and telephone

calls at their Congressmen and Senators and at the White House. It worked.

At the time of the writing of this Monitor we have just learned that our efforts have been successful. Russell Baxter's name has been withdrawn from consideration for appointment as Commissioner of RSA. Once again the voice of the Federation has been heard.

Two groups opposed the appointment: Civil Rights leaders—and the NFB. As might have been expected, the newspapers report that the American Council of the Blind supported him. The latest information is that Mr. Baxter himself stated that his name was dropped from consideration not because of protests by the Civil Rights Movement. In other words, although Mr. Baxter did not say it directly (there are some reports that he did say it directly), he credits the National Federation of the Blind with preventing his appointment. We agree with him. When 50,000 blind Americans take a stand and work together, our voice is heard. Resolutions passed by NFB conventions are very serious business. We take them seriously; our friends take them seriously; and our opponents take them seriously. Resolution 80-15 gives evidence of this in a most dramatic and gratifying manner. Let the NAC/AFB/ACB/ALL combine take note. Let them read what we said to them at the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and let them read what Russell Baxter—one of them—said about us.

There is a time-honored piece of doggerel which says:

Ashes to ashes,  
And dust to dust;  
If God won't have you,  
The Devil must.

We might modernize this stanza to fit the present occasion:

Russell Baxter bit the dust;  
If Carter won't have him,  
Arkansas must.

## RESOLUTIONS: 1980 NFB CONVENTION

Resolutions passed by conventions of the National Federation of the Blind constitute policy decisions of the organization. They deal with the most important matters to be handled in conventions. Each resolution must first be presented to either the Resolutions Committee or the Board of Directors. All resolutions brought before the Resolutions Committee must be brought to the floor of the convention, whether the recommendation of the Committee is pass or not pass. Only the sponsor of the resolution can withdraw it. Thirty-six resolutions were considered at the 1980 convention of the NFB—more than ever before and another indication that the 40th Annual NFB Convention brought the Federation to new heights of influence and effectiveness.

The Officers, Board, and staff of the Federation take these resolutions as directives in their work through the year from one convention to the next. Often (note the resolution concerning Russell Baxter) the passage of a resolution by an NFB convention is key in the accomplishment of important goals for the blind of the nation. Two resolutions passed by the 1980 NFB convention obtained dramatic results within a month after the passage. If a resolution is not passed by the convention, that also is an important decision.

This year the convention was forced to hurry with its consideration of resolutions. Not enough time was available for all the things that needed attention. Therefore, more time will be allowed at next year's convention for the consideration of resolutions.

Resolution 80-01 makes it NFB policy that, although we do not favor or oppose

the draft, if there is a military draft, blind persons, like others, should be subject to it. Not surprisingly, passage of this resolution received notice by the press throughout the country. Many seemed surprised that blind individuals should want this responsibility, but the resolution was not controversial in the least in the Resolutions Committee or on the floor of the convention. Also not surprisingly perhaps, the first reaction received from the Department of Defense has been an attempt to dissuade the NFB from this policy.

Resolutions 80-02 through 80-14 were all passed unanimously by the convention. They dealt with varied matters: including improvements of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Benefits, improvements to the Urban Mass Transit Act, promotion of better opportunities for blind individuals in the broadcasting industry, reaffirmation of a blind person's voting rights, funding the 1978 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, commendation of the National Labor Relations Board for its stand supporting the right of blind sheltered shop workers to organize, promotion of the Federal minimum wage for blind workers in workshops, and support of the Equal Employment Opportunities Act for blind individuals.

Resolution 80-15, dealing with Russell Baxter, has been discussed elsewhere in this issue.

Resolution 80-16 was an attempt by a few people to criticize the activities of another state affiliate. It was considered at length by the Resolutions Committee and by the convention and was overwhelmingly rejected.

Resolutions 80-17, 80-33 and 80-34 had to do with NFB policy with regard to the Pre-Authorized Check (PAC) Plan. If there was any doubt about this policy, it was clarified by a motion that was passed by the convention on Wednesday. The motion was simply this: "It is the policy of the National Federation of the Blind that the PAC Plan be supported by members and officers of the organization." In view of the clear and unmistakable attitude of the convention the three resolutions seemed superfluous and were withdrawn by their authors.

Resolution 80-18 makes recommendation with regard to SSI death benefits. Resolutions 80-19, 80-28, and 80-31 deal with the provision of service to blind college students.

Resolution 80-20 opposes NAC accreditation for the Helen Keller Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults. Resolution 80-24 opposes support of NAC standards by the Department of Education since the NAC standards do not favor provision of quality services to blind persons. Resolutions 80-21 and 80-27 dealt with special markings on money. Both were considered and withdrawn by the author.

Resolutions 80-23 and 80-26 were combined into one which is number 80-23. It deals with fair employment practices for the blind in Federal employment and with the Federal job freeze.

Resolution 80-25 commends the U.S. Department of Labor for its decision to establish the Job Opportunities for the Blind

program which is now operated by the National Federation of the Blind and urges that the contract be renewed and expanded. The resolution was adopted.

Resolution 80-22, deploring the need of any blind person to beg, was tabled. Because of the shortage of time, Resolution 80-32 was also tabled, with the understanding that it would be discussed and voted on at the Tuesday afternoon session of the 1981 convention. The resolution deals with the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the remarks of sports commentators and news broadcasters on television as they affect the blind.

Resolution 80-29 and 80-30 deal with airline policies affecting the blind and deaf-blind and were passed unanimously.

Resolution 80-35 commends the Minneapolis Police Department for its assistance during the demonstration on Wednesday and Resolution 80-36 conveys NFB concerns about the problems with the local Kiwanis Club to Kiwanis International. Both were passed unanimously. The resolutions which were adopted at the 1980 convention are now NFB policy and are being implemented. The number and variety of these resolutions are one more measure of the impact of the 1980 40th Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind and one more measure of the progress we are making up the stairway to independence. We herewith reprint in full the resolutions which were passed by the convention:

#### 80-01 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the blind have long since demonstrated the capacity to work productively and to make meaningful contributions to the progress of our society; and

*Whereas*, as citizens who are capable of competing on terms of equality we advocate policies of equal rights for the blind, while at the same time recognizing our obligation to assume the full responsibilities which go hand-in-hand with first-class status; and



*Whereas*, participation in the defense of our nation through service in the Armed Forces is as important to qualified and capable blind individuals as it is to persons who have sight, yet we are denied the opportunity to serve even on a voluntary basis, let alone being subject to a draft through the selective service process; and

*Whereas*, Congress has appropriated funds to initiate registration through the selective service, raising the possibility that mandatory service in the armed services will again become a reality; and

*Whereas*, it is firmly established policy of this organization to support equal opportunity for blind persons to participate in the defense of our nation through service in the Armed Forces, including, if necessary, selection of blind individuals for service by means of the military draft: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that we reaffirm our view that, as full-fledged citizens, blind persons are capable of serving in the Armed Forces; and

*Be it further resolved*, while taking no stand favoring or opposing registration for the draft, we believe that blind people should be included equally with others in the event that a military draft is reinstituted.

#### 80-02 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, on May 31, 1979 the Department of Transportation (DOT) promulgated regulations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requiring operators of public transit systems to modify their vehicles and facilities so as to make them accessible to and usable by handicapped persons; and

*Whereas*, concern about the cost that may be incurred in complying with these regulations has prompted legislation contained in Sec. 223 of H.R. 6417 now pending in the United States House of Representatives, with a similar provision in S. 2720, a bill now passed by the United States Senate amending the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964; and

*Whereas*, these proposed amendments provide that a State or other recipient of Federal funds may submit to DOT, for its approval, a plan for the transportation of handicapped persons, and such plans may be in compliance with Sec. 504 even if they provide handicapped persons with transportation facilities separate from those used by the general public; and

*Whereas*, Sec. 223 of H.R. 6417 does not at this point contain provisions to prohibit certain forms of discriminatory treatment against handicapped persons (such as the blind) who are fully capable of utilizing unmodified transportation facilities, for example this bill opens the door and virtually invites restrictive policies which might result in limiting all handicapped persons (regardless of disability) to separate transportation services, apart from those available to the general public; and

*Whereas*, we have learned from experience that, whenever a separate program is established for the handicapped, we are required or expected to use it regardless of actual need; and

*Whereas*, the enforced isolation of handicapped persons into separate programs tends to reinforce the myth that they are different from and inferior to others: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization opposes Sec. 223 of H.R. 6417 in its current form, inasmuch as this provision reduces and would irrevocably impair Civil Rights protection for all handicapped individuals as the price to be paid for decreasing anticipated expenditures for compliance with DOT's fully integrated service mandate; and

*Be it further resolved* that, as an alternative, this organization supports amendment of Sec. 223 along the lines of the comparable provision in Senate passed amendments to the Urban Mass Transportation Act, which retain full Civil Rights protection for handicapped persons who do not require alteration of mass transit vehicles or facilities, while diminishing to some degree full impact of the integrated service requirement.

#### 80-03 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, one indication of the progress we have made in our struggle to achieve our rightful status as first-class citizens is the enactment of Federal legislation prohibiting wrongful discrimination against the handicapped by Federal agencies and recipients of Federal funds; and

*Whereas*, significant gaps remain in Federal laws designed to protect our Civil Rights, one major problem being discrimination in the sale or rental of housing based on false stereotypes and groundless fears, such as the fear that a prospective blind tenant's dog guide will damage the premises or that blind tenants will injure themselves or destroy the premises by some act of incompetence; and

*Whereas*, such housing discrimination is presently prohibited only where the housing in question is part of a program receiving Federal financial assistance; and

*Whereas*, the United States House of Representatives has passed H.R. 5200 which, while strengthening Federal enforcement procedures available to combat all forms of housing discrimination, adds the handicapped to those classes of people who are already protected from discrimination in housing under our Federal Civil Rights laws; and

*Whereas*, similar legislation (S. 506) is now pending in the United States Senate having yet to be reported from the Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 3rd day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization applauds and welcomes the passage of H.R. 5200 by the House of Representatives; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization calls upon the Senate to pass this bill promptly in order that fair treatment and an equal opportunity for housing will be guaranteed through the protection of Federal law.

#### 80-04 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) and its adherents loudly proclaim their ethics and professionalism in

setting standards for programs which serve the blind and applying these standards objectively to agencies who (according to their rhetoric) want to offer quality service to the blind; and

*Whereas*, this high-sounding talk was long ago exposed as a sham and a front for enforcing custodial control over the lives of blind people by replacing all forms of independent thought and action with the dictates of the so-called "professionals"; and

*Whereas*, NAC has now embarked upon a deliberately planned strategy of attack, with the calculated intent of pressuring into silence all persons who support meaningful reform of the NAC, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) combine of related agencies and organizations; and

*Whereas*, NAC's true purpose as an instrument of oppression of the blind is confirmed by the unprincipled character and fury of recent attacks upon the National Federation of the Blind and its leaders, these attacks including:

(1) Overt acts of intimidation and harassment to silence outspoken blind persons who publicly espouse views divergent from the doctrine of the NAC, AFB controlled combine of agencies and organizations;

(2) Massive distribution of a resolution condemning our elected national leadership as "harmful to the welfare of blind and visually handicapped persons," with the request that other organizations and agencies adopt a similar stance;

(3) Support and assistance (financial, legal, and otherwise) to agencies and organizations (such as the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and the Cincinnati Association for the Blind) when such organizations have committed acts against the blind in violation of State or Federal law, not to mention violating NAC's own standards;

(4) Campaigns to disrupt legitimate fundraising activities of the National Federation of the Blind by seeking to persuade charitable solicitations officials to withdraw State approval of these programs;

(5) Circulation of self-serving smear-type articles which are planted in the *Des Moines Register*, solely for the purpose of fueling the political machine controlled by NAC and its adherents and not in furtherance of the worthy enterprise of legitimate journalism; and

(6) Most recent of all, an attack upon the Federation's Job Opportunities for the Blind (JOB) project in a manner which proves, once and for all, that NAC, AFB and their combine of related agencies and organizations have no regard at all for quality programs on behalf of the blind, apparently fearing that, through employment, the blind might gain sufficient resources to break out of dependence and poverty and the control of custodial professionals: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization recognizes and regards this most recent pattern of attack by the NAC, AFB and related agency combine as an open declaration of war on the blind, with nothing less intended but the complete suppression of our rights as free citizens; and

*Be it further resolved* that we deplore this disgraceful exhibition of ward-heeler politics and invite all agencies who truly want to serve the blind to join with us in condemning this

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desperate plan of oppression as yet another plank in a well-known strategy of rule or ruin the blind; and

*Be it further resolved* that all levels of the Federation and each member be prepared to participate in protecting our right to self-expression through collective action in defense of our legitimate people's movement.

#### 80-05 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, Congress has just enacted Public Law 96-265, making several far-reaching changes in the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program; and

*Whereas*, a central motivation for these amendments seems to have been the view that the SSDI program was offering thousands of disabled workers and their dependents a comfortable "free-ride" in the form of an over-generous return for their prior contributions to the Social Security Trust Funds; and

*Whereas*, restrictive provisions contained in Public Law 96-265 will result in hefty benefit reductions for disabled workers and their dependents who now become eligible for SSDI checks, while not affecting the benefits payable to those eligible before July, 1980; and

*Whereas*, these benefit reductions will have the harshest impact on younger disabled workers and disabled workers with the maximum number of dependents, thus hitting hardest at the people who can least afford to sustain severe cuts in SSDI benefits, especially during a time of double-digit inflation; and

*Whereas*, it is bitterly ironic that the same Congress which has so far refused to enact Civil Rights Legislation to expand employment opportunities for blind and handicapped individuals has also handed future SSDI beneficiaries an economic blow of serious and major proportions: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization call for Congressional action to repeal the restrictive SSDI amendments which will result in benefit reductions of 15% to 30% for future beneficiaries; and

*Be it further resolved* that every effort be made at the local, State, and national levels of this organization to gather Congressional support for repealing these benefit reductions, including obtaining commitments for such action by all members of Congress and candidates for Congressional seats.

#### 80-06 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, on March 20, 1980, the Federal Communications Commission decided not to amend its Equal Employment Opportunity rules to include handicapped workers, stating, in part, that it is "all but impossible to include them in any reasonable program"; and

*Whereas*, pursuant to resolutions adopted, the National Federation of the Blind participated in the rule making proceeding which was terminated by this decision; and

*Whereas*, the NFB's participation in the rule making proceeding is part of our continued effort to establish equal employment opportunities for the blind in the broadcasting industry, one result of this effort being that blind persons have won the right to receive first-class radio-telephone licenses: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization deplore the Federal Communication Commission's decision which will inevitably lead to continued, widespread discrimination against the blind in commercial and educational broadcasting; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization will aggressively move forward with efforts to expand employment opportunities for blind persons who wish to participate on terms of equality in the broadcasting industry, seeking remedies through appropriate legislation or, if necessary, joining litigation to overturn the Federal Communication Commission's unacceptable and restrictive ruling.

#### 80-07 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the right to participate in our Nation's electoral process by voting for the candidate of one's choice is granted to all citizens and must not be abridged by any conflicting policy, law, or regulation; and

*Whereas*, the National Federation of the Blind has waged a largely successful campaign to insure that voting procedures will permit blind persons to cast their ballots with the aid of a personally chosen assistant rather than having to submit to the scrutiny of election officials in total disregard of the right to a secret ballot; and

*Whereas*, notwithstanding the almost universal acceptance of the freedom of choice rule of blind voters, there are still some jurisdictions which subject the blind to the indignity of being monitored and supervised when voting in Federal, State, and local elections; and

*Whereas*, Federal legislation to provide voting rights for elderly and handicapped citizens is now pending in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States and would substantially alleviate any discrepancy between States and localities by establishing on a national basis the requirement that blind voters be granted freedom of choice in designating and using assistance while voting: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization uphold and reaffirm the principle that voting assistance must be a matter of free choice for blind persons everywhere in this country in recognition of the right of blind persons to vote without pressure from or disclosure to election officials; and

*Be it further resolved* that in view of the recurrent problems which arise each election time as blind persons, nationwide, go to the polls and seek to exercise their right to vote with independence and dignity, this organization call for enactment of protective Federal legislation which will outlaw election procedures which discriminate against the blind by requiring universal fair treatment of blind voters as we embark on this year's Presidential election, the first in the decade of the 1980's.

**80-08 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, Public Law 95-602, the Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Amendments of 1978, significantly increased Federal authority to support specialized services for the blind; and

*Whereas*, specific Federal assistance for expanding reading services for the blind and rehabilitation services for older blind persons is required in order to stimulate the establishment and growth of such programs by State agencies and the private sector; and

*Whereas*, when these services are competently provided, blind persons can benefit substantially by learning the skills of personal independence and by having the resources at hand to compete on terms of equality; and

*Whereas*, despite sound justification for expanded reading services for the blind and the unquestioned need to assist older blind persons through rehabilitation services, Federal support is still nonexistent since the Administration and Congress have failed to provide the appropriations necessary; and

*Whereas*, withholding appropriations from these much needed and cost effective programs which are designed to reduce dependency for blind persons represents misguided judgment and a regrettable degree of insensitivity on the part of the budget cutters, while failing to make a meaningful difference in the Federal deficit situation, especially since not providing these services will only promote prolonged dependency on welfare and social services systems as the inevitable alternative to self-care and self-support: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization urge all members of the 96th Congress to work for and support appropriations for the Federal 1981 fiscal year so that reading services for the blind and rehabilitation services for older blind persons can be provided to an extent sufficient to make good on the promises made by Congress in adopting these programs as a part of the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1978; and

*Be it further resolved* that an amount of \$2 million is considered to be minimally adequate to expand reading services for the blind under Sec. 314 of the Rehabilitation Act, while \$27 million is required to begin programs authorized under parts A and C of Title VII of the Act which (along with creating new authority for providing "Comprehensive Services" to all disabled persons) incorporate special rehabilitation programs to meet the needs of unserved older blind persons.

**80-09 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, in its 1976 decision involving the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) first recognized that blind people who work in sheltered workshops are "employees" engaged in the manufacturing and production of goods which are sold in commerce; and

*Whereas*, the National Federation of the Blind hailed this decision as a ringing declaration of rights for blind shop workers who had long been subjected to management's iron clad rule without any recourse or protection whatsoever; and

*Whereas*, although the management of the Chicago Lighthouse successfully blocked collective bargaining by blind employees, shop workers in other parts of the country took heart with the NLRB decision in Chicago and launched successful organizing campaigns; and

*Whereas*, employees of the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and the Lighthouse for the Blind of Houston have become the first blind shop workers to form collective bargaining units and to choose to be represented by organized labor, each group having designated a Teamsters local as the labor union to represent the workers; and

*Whereas*, these blind workers chose the protection of organized labor pursuant to orders of the NLRB, yet management in both cases continues to obstruct the orderly process of collective bargaining, intentionally violating further directives of the NLRB by failing to "cease and desist" from engaging in unfair labor practices prohibited by the National Labor Relations Act: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 2nd day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization commends and loudly applauds the National Labor Relations Board for steadfastly pursuing the policy of protecting blind shop workers by assuring and defending their right as workers to organize and bargain collectively; and

*Be it further resolved* that special recognition is hereby given to the blind production employees who work at the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and the Lighthouse for the Blind of Houston for their courage and tenacity in resisting the ever present pressures and intimidations of management; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization shall continue to pursue all measures necessary and within its power to extend the hand of strength and support to blind people who work in the workshops in order that the right to organize will have universal application in the sheltered industries of this country.

#### 80-10 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, H.R. 3236, now assigned into law as Public Law 96-265, addresses work disincentives which are present in the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program; and

*Whereas*, the single, most substantial work disincentive present for SSDI beneficiaries is the severe restriction on earnings, known as the "Substantial Gainful Activity Test" (SGA), which limits income produced through work as the primary means of determining the existence of a disability; and

*Whereas*, for a person who is blind within the meaning of Section 216(i)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act the SGA test (which this year allows such a person to have earnings which average \$417 per month) serves only to limit productive activity and stifles all but a minimal effort at self-support; and

*Whereas*, Section 505 of Public Law 95-265 directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and carry out experiments and demonstration projects designed to evaluate methods for removing work disincentives and otherwise to assess the practical effect of various SSDI provisions; and

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*Whereas*, the unique position of the blind as a defined disability group makes this class of SSDI beneficiaries an excellent target population for studies of the effect of the earnings limitation imposed by SGA, since with this group there is no question as to the existence of a disability: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that the Social Security Administration is hereby urged to incorporate plans for studying the relaxation and removal of the SGA earnings limitation among the first series of experiments and demonstrations to be performed pursuant to Section 505; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization recommend a special review of the effect of the SGA earnings limitation on blind SSDI beneficiaries in view of the fact that the current limitation on earnings for blind SSDI beneficiaries is of no value in identifying the existence of the disability while at the same time serving the punitive function of penalizing legitimate attempts at self-support.

#### 80-11 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, Title XVI of the Social Security Act, establishing the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program limits the personal resources which can be accumulated and retained by eligible individuals and couples; and

*Whereas*, the original limits on resources of \$1,500 for eligible individuals and \$2,500 for eligible couples were enacted by Congress when the SSI Program was created in 1972; and

*Whereas*, upon enactment in 1972, these resource limits were unreasonably low, forcing aged, blind, and disabled persons to abandon personal and financial security in order to receive monthly SSI checks; and

*Whereas*, eight years of inflation has further penalized SSI recipients and applicants for benefits since the Consumer Price Index shows a 72.4% increase from January, 1973, to June, 1980; and

*Whereas*, the \$1,500 which Congress considered appropriate for eligible individuals in 1972 has steadily lost value in terms of 1972 dollars, making it worth only \$870 in 1980, while the \$2,250 which an eligible couple is allowed to retain now has a value of only \$1,305; and

*Whereas*, following the principle enunciated in National Federation of the Blind Resolution 79-08, it is now appropriate that these resource limits be reevaluated and revised upward in order to make them adequate to reflect the actual changes in the value of the dollar, thus it is our position that an eligible individual should be allowed resources of at least \$5,000, while an eligible couple should be permitted to have at least \$7,500: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that we call for enactment of remedial legislation to increase the resource limits in the SSI Program; and

*Be it further resolved* that this legislation shall include an annual inflationary indexing clause in order to avoid diminishing the value of allowed resources to the extent that the cost of living continues to rise.



**80-12 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, Titles II and XVI of the Social Security Act contain numerous special eligibility conditions and requirements which have unique applicability to blind beneficiaries and applicants for SSDI and SSI benefits; and

*Whereas*, generally speaking these provisions have been enacted by Congress to stimulate rehabilitation and employment efforts on the part of blind persons while still providing some minimum financial assistance in the form of continued monthly cash benefits; and

*Whereas*, examples of these unique eligibility provisions include a statutory test of Substantial Gainful Activity in the case of blind SSDI beneficiaries and the allowed deduction of ordinary work expenses which applies to the blind under the SSI program; yet, important as these and related provisions are, the Social Security Administration has made little or no effort to circulate public information materials which describe them, and, indeed, most Social Security officials are uninformed of these provisions and therefore unable to provide appropriate and necessary assistance to blind beneficiaries and applicants: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization urge the Social Security Administration to initiate immediately a program with the objective of providing blind persons and Social Security Representatives more accurate and complete information concerning special eligibility rules for the blind; this program to include (but not limited to) dissemination of a special brochure (produced in Braille or recorded form as well as in print) which describes in plain terms the unique eligibility conditions which apply to the blind in the SSDI and SSI programs and circulation of special instructions and explanatory materials to all Social Security Claims and Service Representatives; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization shall do all in its power to assist the Social Security Administration in the preparation, production, and dissemination of more appropriate public information materials which are especially designed for out-reach to the blind.

**80-13 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, the protection of a Federally required minimum wage has been established for decades as a right of American workers who produce goods and services as a part of our nation's industrial economy; and

*Whereas*, by means of a legal exemption (Sec. 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act) blind workers are denied full protection of the minimum wage mandate, hence a legal wage may be as low as ¼ of the statutory minimum, yet actually wages are sometimes even less because of widespread, unchecked violations of the current law; and

*Whereas*, denial of the minimum wage is predicated on the theory that it promotes employment opportunities by offering employers a ready source of low cost labor, and further it is reasoned that these employers (especially so-called sheltered workshops) are certainly possessed of benevolent spirit or else they would not hire the blind; and

*Whereas*, by hiding behind this facade of providing work opportunities to blind persons who are then erroneously classified as subnormal employees, the sheltered workshops are allowed to subject these workers to a rigid system of productivity evaluations which forces the blind workers to prove that they are worth even the pittance which the law allows; and

*Whereas*, under the present legislation and regulations management holds all the cards by (1) determining the work to be done as well as the type and quality of equipment with which to do it; (2) establishing the "prevailing wage rates" on all jobs and prescribing the exact production methods; (3) setting the piece rate standards while controlling the precise flow of material and hence the amount of work available; (4) restricting the number of working hours which places an additional limitation on output and performance thus further reducing the wages which are earned, not to mention denying employees the fringe benefits which full-time workers enjoy; (5) permitting unhealthy, hazardous working conditions; (6) conducting time studies to "evaluate" workers' performance and then using this information as the mechanism for justifying a subminimum wage; and (7) controlling all of the foregoing factors while at the same time denying workers the benefits and protections of collective bargaining agreements, which, under the circumstances, could only serve as a reasonable check and balance: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 2nd day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization commend the Subcommittee on Labor Standards in the United States House of Representatives and its Chairman, the Honorable Edward P. Beard of Rhode Island, for initiating a review and investigation of the subminimum wage system as it is currently in practice in the sheltered workshops of this country; and

*Be it further resolved* that this Federation, having long since recognized the need for sweeping reform of the subminimum wage policy, urge the Congress to pay heed to the continued pleas of blind workers for equal and equitable treatment in the labor force, with the recommendation that this can best be done by enacting legislation now before Congress which will guarantee all blind workers at least the Federal minimum wage.

#### 80-14 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the 96th Congress opened with a new initiative to combat employment discrimination against the blind and handicapped through a bill (S. 446, "The Equal Employment Opportunity for Handicapped Individuals Act of 1979") introduced by Senator Harrison Williams, chairman of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the United States Senate; and

*Whereas*, the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources reported S. 446 with amendments and with only one dissenting vote, on August 1, 1979, thus promising speedy action by the Senate during the first session of the 96th Congress; and

*Whereas*, subsequent to the reporting of S. 446, several strategic maneuvers have sidetracked and so far prevented consideration of the merits of this proposal on the floor of the United States Senate, the most recent of these being an unfavorable report by the Senate Budget Committee and the Committee's narrow vote against a waiver of the Congressional budget resolution which is technically necessary in order for S. 446 to be debated on the Senate Floor without procedural objection, never mind the merits of enacting protective legislation to alleviate employment discrimination against the handicapped; and

*Whereas*, it has been alleged that the cost to our nation's economy resulting from enactment of S. 446 would likely be of astronomical proportions (the estimate which appears in

the Senate Report disapproving the waiver of the budget resolution is \$6.8 billion), yet these estimates have no basis in our real-world experience with the already required affirmative action and nondiscrimination programs which exist, and furthermore, they disregard the inevitability that unemployed handicapped persons are left with no alternative but to maintain themselves at taxpayers' expense on our nation's welfare and social security roles while not contributing their productivity to our nation's economy: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization rejects the unfounded proposition that employment of the blind and handicapped is prohibitively expensive, or for that matter, that it need be a burden at all, for we are prepared to carry our own weight on the job, given an equal opportunity to prove ourselves; and

*Be it further resolved* that this message of independence shall be transmitted forthwith to the members of the United States Senate, each of whom is hereby urged to permit and demand forthright and speedy consideration of S. 446 on its merits on the Senate floor.

#### 80-15 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, E. Russell Baxter, currently the State Vocational Rehabilitation Director for the State of Arkansas, is aggressively seeking to be nominated for Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration in the newly-established Federal Education Department; and

*Whereas*, Russell Baxter is the "special interest" candidate of some "professional" rehabilitation workers and Washington lobbyists; and

*Whereas*, although Russell Baxter has so far managed to entice support from some Washington political figures, he has not won respect and endorsement from the rank-and-file of handicapped persons and their organizations; and

*Whereas*, the record of Russell Baxter's administration of Arkansas rehabilitation includes proof of serious flaws related to compliance with Federal civil rights statutes, with additional charges still under investigation; and

*Whereas*, no thorough and objective talent search was initiated to identify the most competent person for this most important appointment as Rehabilitation Services Commissioner, the name of Russell Baxter, having surfaced simultaneously with the rumor that the RSA Commissioner's position would be up for appointment, yet there being no open consultation with the interested public affected: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization oppose the nomination of E. Russell Baxter for Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and call for his name to be withdrawn from consideration in view of its origin as a self-serving, special interest maneuver of power seeking rehabilitation professionals; and

*Be it further resolved* that this Federation recognize the singular importance of the Rehabilitation Services Commissioner appointment, and therefore urge President Jimmy Carter to order and direct a wide-spread and public talent search to identify and nominate the most competent administrator who is not encumbered by the narrow political motives and vested interests of so-called "Rehabilitation professionals."

**RESOLUTION 80-16  
WITHDRAWN**

**RESOLUTION 80-17  
WITHDRAWN**

**80-18 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, prior to the inception of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in January, 1974, California's Aid to the Blind Program provided that in the event of the death of a recipient, all benefits due the recipient must be paid to the recipient's estate; and

*Whereas*, under the SSI Program no benefits due the deceased recipient at the time of death are paid to the estate; and

*Whereas*, the lack of payment to the estate of benefits accruing to the recipient at the time of death may result in causing an undue financial hardship on the family: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization urge the Social Security Administration to make appropriate changes in the SSI Program to include payment to the estate of the deceased any of the benefits accruing to the recipient at the time of death.

**80-19 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, the National Federation of the Blind has worked tirelessly and successfully to remove the "means test" and "relatives responsibility" from consideration as an eligibility factor in social services benefits; and

*Whereas*, many States are implementing agreements between their respective Departments of Rehabilitation and their Student Financial Aid Administrators for joint eligibility and benefit determination; and

*Whereas*, this joint process brings the "means test" and "relatives responsibility" of Student Financial Aid into rehabilitation; and

*Whereas*, the National Federation of the Blind cannot now allow these regressive changes to creep into the field of rehabilitation: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this Federation opposes the concept of Student Financial Aid requirements being tied to eligibility determination for Rehabilitation Services.

**80-20 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults is the only Federally funded agency established exclusively to serve the deaf-blind; and

*Whereas*, the time, energy, and financial resources of the Helen Keller National Center should be used only to meet the unique needs of the deaf-blind; and

*Whereas*, the Helen Keller National Center is considering accreditation by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC); and

*Whereas*, the blind have long known that NAC accreditation does nothing to improve agency services, but rather promotes stiffling mediocrity and arrogant insensitivity toward consumers of services; and

*Whereas*, time, energy, and money spent on meaningless and detrimental accreditation robs the deaf-blind of substantial services to which they are entitled: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization vigorously opposes any attempt by the Helen Keller National Center to seek NAC accreditation; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization communicate this position, and our reasons for it, to members of Congress, the Helen Keller National Center, and all those interested in the deaf-blind.

**RESOLUTION 80-21  
WITHDRAWN**

**RESOLUTION 80-22  
TABLED**

**80-23 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, the Federal government is required by law to take affirmative steps to hire and to promote handicapped persons—the law, in effect, requires the Federal government to practice what it preaches to others; and

*Whereas*, with the exception of some civil rights enforcement agencies and some specialized programs, there is no evidence whatsoever that the Federal government is complying with the requirements of this law; and

*Whereas*, most Federal agencies still do not hire blind persons and particularly do not hire blind persons for positions in the higher levels of the civil service; and

*Whereas*, periodically imposed freezes on Federal hiring restrict the opportunities available to blind persons seeking employment in the Federal service; and

*Whereas*, promotion for those blind persons who have succeeded in gaining Federal employment is often exceedingly slow or nonexistent: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization calls upon the Federal government to live up to its duty under the law aggressively offering positions throughout the Federal service to qualified blind persons; and

*Be it further resolved* that the concerns expressed in this Resolution be communicated to the Office of Personnel Management, pointing out the disproportionate impact of hiring freezes on opportunities for blind persons and demanding that the Office of Personnel Management devise a method of eliminating this additional hardship; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization insists that the discrimination in the granting of promotions under Federal employment cease.

#### 80-24 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the National Federation of the Blind is fundamentally committed to the principle that quality services to blind persons must begin with aggressive, well-rounded educational programs for blind children; and

*Whereas*, the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) purports to evaluate and accredit educational programs for blind children; and

*Whereas*, NAC's standards are completely irrelevant since, for every school, there is a mainstream, regional accrediting body which already accredits school programs; and

*Whereas*, piggybacking NAC's standards on pre-existing accreditation allows separate and unequal accreditation for blind programs, a regressive and totally discredited concept in education; and

*Whereas*, NAC's standards presume and encourage custodialized treatment of the child by the school, both in academic and in attitudinal terms; and

*Whereas*, the spring, 1980, issue of the "Standard Bearer" (NAC's house organ) reported that attempts are being made to secure the support of the Honorable Shirley Hufstедler, Secretary of Education, these efforts being spearheaded by the American Association of Workers for the Blind, but not by the blind themselves: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization urges Secretary Hofstедler to reject the self-serving overtures of NAC and insist upon objective and ethical standard setting and accrediting for programs providing special education services to the blind; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization urges the Education Department, through the Office of Special Education, to consult with State affiliates of the National Federation of the Blind when reviewing educational programs or services available to blind children in the States and local school districts.

#### 80-25 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the Job Opportunities for the Blind Program (JOB) is a national referral and support service to assist blind job applicants in securing competitive employment, and to assist employers in recruiting blind employees and in learning about the capabilities of blind persons; and

*Whereas*, Job Opportunities for the Blind is operated by the National Federation of the Blind under contract with the United States Department of Labor; and

*Whereas*, Job Opportunities for the Blind, in its first six months of operation, has been an unqualified success, conducting seminars and registering hundreds of blind applicants; holding workshops and distributing information to employers throughout the country; and assisting twenty-three blind persons to find competitive employment; and

*Whereas*, the very success of the JOB program has demonstrated the need to continue and to expand these vital and unique services: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization commend the United States Department of Labor for the development and support of this project and for its commitment to promote competitive employment for blind persons; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization urge the United States Department of Labor to continue and to expand the funding for this program so that blind Americans can receive the assistance to which they are entitled and gain complete acceptance in the mainstream of the American world of work.

**RESOLUTION 80-26  
COMBINED WITH 80-23**

**RESOLUTION 80-27  
WITHDRAWN**

**80-28 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, a good education is important in finding a good job and living a good life; and

*Whereas*, a high quality education program is of fundamental importance to blind students preparing for life-long careers; and

*Whereas*, Federal and State rehabilitation officials are currently seeking to evade their statutory responsibilities to serve handicapped and blind students, hiding behind the preposterous excuse that civil rights laws which prohibit discrimination on the basis of handicap require educational institutions to pay the tab for specialized service to the handicapped; and

*Whereas*, although many colleges and universities are rightly resisting this sly effort to make them administer and pay for services which rehabilitation agencies should be rendering, some educational institutions have seized upon what they perceive as a new opportunity to expand their responsibilities and swell their budgets by adding special service programs which too often paternalize and protect blind students from the ordinary and healthy competitive academic environment; and

*Whereas*, Federal civil rights officials have contributed to the confusion which exists by refusing to articulate a straight forward and rational position which could clarify the lines of responsibility for service to blind and handicapped students: and

*Whereas*, it is ironic that under the guise of new civil rights protection for the handicapped, needed services are actually being denied while the administrators and bureaucrats

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play political power games with one another and ignore their basic responsibilities: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization calls for an end to the confusion over responsibility for specialized services to handicapped and blind students attending post-secondary educational institutions; and

*Be it further resolved* that to achieve this objective this organization requests a meeting with the Secretary of Education (the Honorable Shirley Hufstedler) and appropriate policy making officials in the areas of vocational rehabilitation, higher education and civil rights in order that a comprehensive solution may be forged which will insure that vital services will be made available without bureaucratic red tape.

### 80-29 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the right to travel is a right protected by the Constitution and is fundamental to the freedom enjoyed by citizens of this country; and

*Whereas*, blind people no less than other persons are guaranteed this right to travel; and

*Whereas*, until recently, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) actively encouraged the abridgment of the right of blind persons to travel by its silly and whimsical insistence that our white canes constitute a safety hazard in air travel; and

*Whereas*, the FAA has now confessed that its stance had no basis and, in fact, that in reality, our white canes contribute materially to the safety of passengers; and

*Whereas*, some airline personnel are today still stashing away the white canes of blind passengers; and

*Whereas*, the FAA is shirking its legal and moral responsibility by affirming that our white canes are safe and useful while shrinking from the enforcement of our right to carry our canes. The FAA still permits cane confiscation though no shred of justification remains for this abridgment of our rights after the FAA itself has ripped away the fig-leaf rationale once used for seizures of canes: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization condemn the continued confiscation of the white canes of blind air passengers which is in contravention of all reason; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization demand that the FAA immediately adopt a new rule, recognizing the validity of its own research by requiring that airlines cease molesting and harassing blind passengers by confiscating their white canes.

### 80-30 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, U.S. Air revised its Passenger Service Manual on February 4, 1980, and thereby designated deaf-blind passengers as "unacceptable passengers"; and

*Whereas*, this policy has already led to discriminatory experiences for some deaf-blind passengers; and



*Whereas*, this revision requires that deaf-blind passengers board, travel, and deplane with an attendant or they will not be permitted to fly at all; and

*Whereas*, the requirement of an attendant in flight further adds the unreasonable burden upon the deaf-blind person of locating and paying for an attendant; and

*Whereas*, some deaf-blind individuals need and desire an attendant in travel, others are perfectly capable of traveling on the airlines without this type of assistance: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization condemns the regressive practice of requiring an attendant in flight for deaf-blind passengers; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization demand that U.S. Air cease and desist from implementing this punitive policy with respect to deaf-blind passengers thereby restoring to the deaf-blind the dignity and right to travel unimpaired and unhindered.

#### 80-31 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the letter and intent of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, especially Section 103, is to provide specific rehabilitation services through designated State rehabilitation agencies; and

*Whereas*, the responsibility of postsecondary educational institutions is to provide accessible education; and

*Whereas*, rehabilitation services and education are funded separately; and

*Whereas*, policy and past practice have been for the State rehabilitation agencies to provide the services necessary for blind students, agreeing on the services to be provided to each student and embodying this agreement in an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP); and

*Whereas*, the Rehabilitation Services Administration has adopted an interim policy (RSA-PI-78-7) which states, "it is important that RSA take the lead in assuring that handicapped students do not have their educational programs disrupted because of the absence of needed auxiliary aids"; and

*Whereas*, the regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, have created confusion with respect to the role of postsecondary educational institutions and rehabilitation agencies in providing auxiliary aids and services to blind students; and

*Whereas*, postsecondary institutions lack sufficient resources to provide the services which have traditionally been available through designated State rehabilitation agencies, resulting in inconsistency in the provision of services and forfeiture of quality in the name of "cost effectiveness"; and

*Whereas*, the present condition impedes the progress of many blind students, resulting in lengthy and costly appeals concerning disputed services in their IWRPs: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization strongly

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urges the Rehabilitation Services Administration to develop a clearly defined policy concerning the provision of auxiliary aids and services to blind students; and

*Be it further resolved* that this policy ensures the availability of uniformly effective and high quality services for blind students regardless of their field of study or choice of post-secondary educational institution for attendance.

**RESOLUTION 80-32  
TABLED**

**RESOLUTION 80-33  
WITHDRAWN**

**RESOLUTION 80-34  
WITHDRAWN**

**80-35 ADOPTED**

*Whereas*, the blind of the nation gathered in Minneapolis for the annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind during the week of June 29, 1980; and

*Whereas*, the blind of the nation—outraged by the repressive, vicious behavior of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind—marched on July 2, from our headquarters hotel to the Society to carry our message to that agency; and

*Whereas*, the 2,500 delegates marched in pairs along a 3.2 mile march route through downtown Minneapolis which included the use of some city street lanes, the crossing of many intersections, the passing of freeway exit ramps, and the temporary blocking of two of the busiest downtown streets; and

*Whereas*, arrangements for the march were made beforehand with the Minneapolis Police Force whose officers were uniformly courteous, responsive, and helpful during the negotiations; and

*Whereas*, Minneapolis police officers turned out in force along the march route to redirect traffic flow and to provide logistical support for the blind marchers; and

*Whereas*, every police officer along the march route was courteous and friendly, seeming to enter into the Federation spirit of good humored determination; some officers even made suggestions to Federationists marshalling the march on ways that an even better impression could be made upon the public; and

*Whereas*, numerous officers were overheard to remark that our march was, in their experience, one of the best-organized demonstrations they had ever seen; and

*Whereas*, the Minneapolis Police Force has extended an invitation to this organization to return in 1982 for a victory march: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization commends and applauds the warm and respective attitude of the Minneapolis Police Department which

contrasts so ironically with the police atmosphere, which pervades the Minneapolis Society for the Blind; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization gladly accepts the invitation of the Minneapolis Police Department and will return in full force to the city of Minneapolis in July of 1982.

#### 80-36 ADOPTED

*Whereas*, the National Federation of the Blind is an organization of 50,000 members and is the only organization representing blind consumers; and

*Whereas*, the National Federation of the Blind is meeting in convention assembled in the Leamington Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and has all the public meeting space under contract for the week; and

*Whereas*, as a gracious gesture to a community service organization, the National Federation of the Blind gave the Downtown Kiwanis Club a portion of our space for its weekly meeting; and

*Whereas*, the local club's program chairman for the day, Jesse Rosten, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, scheduled a program in our headquarters hotel to discuss the topic "Who Speaks for the Blind?"; and

*Whereas*, the Downtown Kiwanis Club invited as its featured, honored luncheon guest a declared enemy of the National Federation of the Blind, which invitation was an insult to the thousands of blind people in convention assembled; and

*Whereas*, the local club thereby injected itself into a deeply-felt philosophical and political struggle between the blind of this nation and those who purport to speak for us; and

*Whereas*, representatives of the National Federation of the Blind met with local Kiwanis officials, tried to work out a fair solution, offered the local president time on our crowded convention program, and finally requested a mere five minutes during the club meeting to present the views of blind consumers, gathered here by the thousands, on the topic "Who Speaks for the Blind?"; and

*Whereas*, the local club simply ignored our reasonable proposals, refused to send a speaker to our convention and further refused to allow our representatives to speak at its meeting: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved* by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1980, in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, that this organization condemns and deplors the perfidious attack by Jesse Rosten to hoodwink his fellow Kiwanians, not at all uncharacteristic of his past behavior toward the blind of this country; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization regrets the apparent willingness and acquiescence of the Minneapolis Downtown Kiwanis Club to be hoodwinked in such a way; and

*Be it further resolved* that this organization calls upon Kiwanis International to censure, reprimand and rebuke the Minnesota Downtown Kiwanis Club for entering into a raging controversy within the field of work with the blind, and instead to apologize publicly to the National Federation of the Blind for having abused its gracious hospitality.

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## MONITOR MINIATURES ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

### ☐ *Jobs and Training for Blind People Interested in Being Computer Programmers*

Baruch College, Manufacturers Hanover Trust and The University of Manitoba are sponsoring a program to recruit, employ and train visually impaired persons as computer programmers. A pool of corporations will hire, and then have their employees trained at Baruch College.

Requirements for recruitment are a minimum of two years of college or equivalent work experience. For further information contact Jack Ried at Manufacturers Hanover Trust, Human Resources Department, 39th Floor, 55 Water Street, New York, New York 10015, (212) 623-2408, or Judy Gerber at the Baruch College Computer Center for the Visually Impaired at (212) 725-7644.

### ☐ From Don Morris:

Those attending the 1980 convention of the National Federation of the Blind in Minneapolis will remember the presentation made by Mr. Les Rush, Vice President, National Marketing Systems, Medical Emergency Data, P.O. Box 582, Sparks, Maryland 21152. Mr. Rush is selling Medical Emergency Data service at \$14.95 per person. For each sale he makes he says he will donate \$4.45 to the National Treasury of the Federation. M.E.D. can be extremely valuable to our members, and it can also be helpful to the treasury. Mr. Rush describes M.E.D. as follows:

"When the situation arises and you need emergency medical treatment, the emergency medical personnel need information—and they need it fast. MEDICAL EMERGENCY DATA was designed to supply that critical information, in the event that you are unable to, due to unconsciousness or shock.

M.E.D. is a simple information system consisting of two forms of identification; a laminated wallet card and a laminated tag, both containing a piece of microfilm with your personal medical data.

The information consists of the following:

- Your name, address and telephone number
- Your doctor's name and telephone number
- Friends or relatives to contact
- Employer
- Insurance company and policy number
- Your medical history
- Medication that you are taking
- Allergies and medications that you are allergic to
- Optional sections to pre-authorize several medical treatments

MEDICAL EMERGENCY DATA is the most comprehensive form of medical data available.

Protect yourself and support the N.F.B.

For your application, send \$14.95 to:

Medical Emergency Data  
P.O. Box 582  
Sparks, Maryland 21152

Checks in the amount of \$14.95 should be made payable to Medical Emergency Data and should accompany the request for an application. All applications will be accepted."

### ☐ From David Stayer of New York:

"On Thursday, June 19, 1980, I attended the dedication ceremonies of the Industrial Home for the Blind's Hempstead facility. I was invited because of my professional position and not because I am a Federationist. Armed with my NFB cane, pin and button, I attended. Of course, Richard W. Bleecker was there, and the usual "We are pleased with the Village of Hempstead," etc. took place. To my chagrin, I have been informed

that the IHB has just about completed "A rehabilitation innovation that will be a model for the rest of the country." Evidently, what they have done, is, they have borrowed used parking meters, telephone poles, and other obstacles to use in their soon to be completed tracking room. They are building an inside sidewalk. I asked the tour guide if the object was that whoever knocked over the most parking meters won. She assured me they are real meters. I asked if they planned to have real crowds of people, real cars, etc. I think she got my point. I took this tour with Mrs. Larkin, and two of their daughters. Two more IHB firsters should be noted. Apparently, every potential client has a psychometric examination, and their audio booth has speakers in the ceiling apparently to teach the blind person something about sound. That was my afternoon at the IHB."

□ From Jim Shaffer, 8512 Remington Lane, Austin, Texas 78758:

"I am considering showing the dog I have in obedience trials. From the looks of things, the kennel club sponsoring the show has the right to turn down any entry if they feel just cause warrants. I am wondering if you know any blind people who show or have tried to do so.

I have not tried yet, and I know I can do it, but I wonder if you have heard of any successes in this area, or failures."

□ From Joanne Fernandes:

"The Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee of the NFB would like to remind all readers that we are still collecting used Braille watches and Braille materials to be sent to underdeveloped countries. The Braille watches do not need to be in working condition. They should be sent to: Mrs. Junerose Killian, 7 Chaplin Hill Ct., Niantic, CT 06357. This year the Braille Book Project not only

wants Braille books and magazines (no religious materials, please), but they also would like donations of Braille paper and Braille writing equipment. They would also accept money donations earmarked to purchase writing materials to be sent to blind persons in other countries. Church or service organizations might be interested in undertaking such a project. The Braille materials should be sent as free matter for the blind to: National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, 2232 S. Broadway, Denver, Colorado 80210."

□ From the *Des Moines Sunday Register*, February 17, 1980:

**Blind agency's audit is termed a good review**

By Brian Owen

Register Staff Writer

A recent audit questioning the use of federal funds by the Iowa Commission for the Blind was called a good review Saturday by the director of the federal body that oversees state rehabilitation agencies.

Isaac Johnson, director of the regional office for rehabilitation services of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare in Kansas City, told the three members of the Iowa commission at a board meeting that the audit might have been considered bad only if it had called for repayment of federal funds.

□ The Sharp Electronics Corporation announced that it has developed a Braille conversion kit for its own microwave ovens and for all other microwave ovens for which it manufactures the controls (GE, for instance). For further information contact:

Bette E. Gollrad

Cunningham & Walsh, Inc.

260 Madison Avenue

New York, New York 10016

(212) 683-4900

- From Susan Franklin:

"Braille Missions is proud to be able to offer *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, one of the best Bible study books ever written. 9C 117 pages \$3.00. You may order from: Braille Missions, North Presbyterian Church, 4222 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45223."

- From the Mid-Michigan Center for the Blind:

"It is our pleasure to announce the transfer of the Mahoney Gift House to the Mid-Michigan Center for the Blind.

We will extend the same prompt services that were provided by the Mahoneys.

For a 1980 Braille Catalog send \$1.00 to MMCB Gift Department (address below). When ordering Michigan residents please include 4 percent sales tax.

ADDRESS:

Mid-Michigan Center for the Blind  
P.O. Box 20247  
111 S. Capital Avenue  
Lansing, Michigan 48901."

- From Paul Burkhardt:

At its June meeting, the National Federation of the Blind of Nashoba Valley, Inc., the chapter serving the blind of the North Worcester County, Massachusetts vicinity, elected the following slate of officers to fill the next two-year term:

President, Phillip Oliver, Jr.  
Vice-President, John Beaulieu  
Secretary, Paul Burkhardt  
Treasurer, Joan (Toni) Beaulieu  
State Delegate, Claire Oliver  
Legislative Officer, Sharon Strzalkowski

- From the NFB of New Jersey:

The National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey has printed summaries of the state laws affecting blind people on wallet size cards that can be shown to a sighted

person when a problem arises. The subjects covered are voting rights, the right to use dog guides and prohibition of housing and employment discrimination. Anyone wishing these cards should send their request and a stamped self-addressed envelope to Sharon Kelly, 265 Winfield Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07305.

- On March 19, 1980, John B. Sinclair was named Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind. He replaced James Ryder, who received the Newel Perry Award at this year's national convention in Minneapolis.

- The NFB of Georgia held its annual convention May 3, 1980, in Albany. The following people were elected to office:

President, Max Parker  
First Vice President, Tommy Johnson  
Second Vice President, Tyrone Palmer  
Secretary, Anne Griffiths  
Treasurer, Carrie Harris  
Board Members, Isaac Haywood, Geneva Lyde, Clare Greene, and Hugh Nash

- The NFB of New Mexico held its annual convention April 25-27, 1980, in Las Vegas (New Mexico, that is, not Nevada). The following people were elected to office:

Lee Jones, from Las Cruces, President  
Pauline Gomez, Santa Fe, First Vice President  
Loretta Jones, Las Cruces, Secretary  
Charlie Maes, Albuquerque, Treasurer  
Willard Hughey, Alamogordo, Chapter Representative  
Linda Miller, Albuquerque, Chapter Representative  
Mike Ruddy, Las Cruces, Chapter Representative

Josie Dean, Las Vegas, Chapter Representative

Kenneth Curr, Roswell, Chapter Representative

Joe Gonzales, Santa Fe, Chapter Representative

- The NFB of South Dakota held its annual convention April 26, 1980, in Rapid

City. The following people were elected to office:

President, Karen Mayry

Vice President, Kathleen McRae

Secretary, Shirley Bredenkamp

Treasurer, Joe Bollwerk

Directors, Gailand Fischer, Roger

Dubblede, Joyce Egelston, and Ray

Spomer











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